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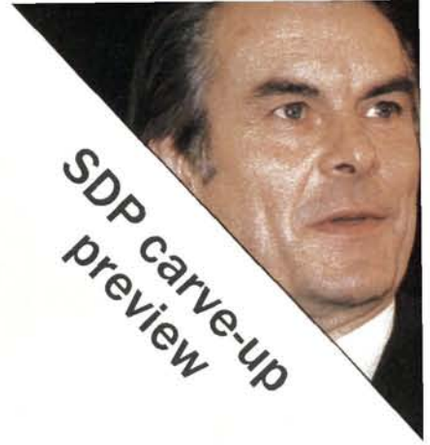

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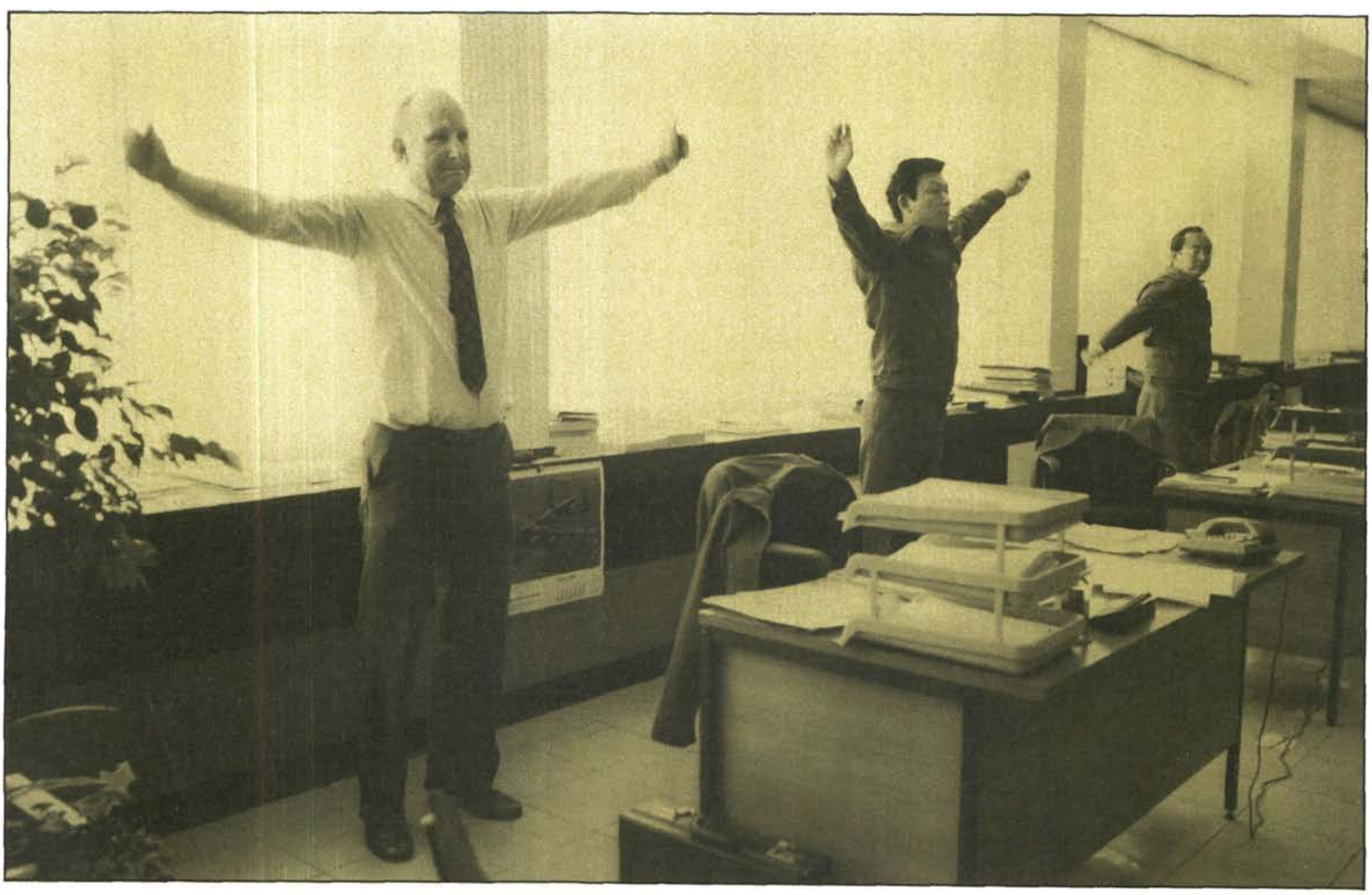

'Welcome to the Japanese'

Cover photo: From 'Chopsticks, Bulldozers and Newcastle Brown', Brass Tacks, BBC2

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LAST YEAR IN BRITAIN WE EACH GAVE LESS THAN THIS TO THE CANCER RESEARCH CAMPAIGN.

Many, many people give generously to the Cancer Research Campaign each year, as do companies, clubs, schools and communities of all kinds.

And altogether, millions of pounds are donated.

Furthermore, a full 92% of that money is put directly into researching the causes of cancer, its prevention, early detection and treatment.

But that sum of money could be so much greater. Because still, there are many people who haven't yet given anything.

In fact, when averaged out, the amount given last year to the Cancer Research Campaign was less than 13p per person.

Nevertheless, with the money given to research, there's no doubt that great things have already been achieved.

For instance, well over half the children who develop cancer can now be cured.

And many forms of cancer are now almost always curable: testicular cancer in men, cancer of the placenta in women, Hodgkins disease in young people, and the common forms of skin cancer.

While the introduction of screening for breast cancer and cervical cancer would not have been possible without research.

Even the causes of many cancers have been discovered: cigarette smoking, diet, lifestyle; our education programmes are aimed at all of these. We also know viruses can cause some cancers.

These are only a few examples of the progress that has been made, and they are by no means the only ones.

But cancer is still a big problem. Although 75,000 people are successfully treated each year (that's 1 in 3 cancer sufferers) over 155,000 people a year die of it.

Much more must be done.

And with more money, much more can be done.

Like the early detection of ovarian cancer, like a vaccine to counter the virus that is a cause of cervical cancer, like better anti-cancer drugs with fewer side effects, and like a better understanding of the psychological problems of cancer patients.

These are just some of the advances in the pipeline, and more will surely follow.

So if you have been giving to the Cancer Research Campaign, thank you, and please don't stop giving.

But if you haven't yet given to the Cancer Research Campaign, perhaps you might consider now is the time to start.

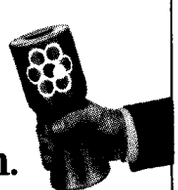
If you want to help us, you could make a donation, a deed of covenant, a regular gift through your salary, or a legacy. Or you could donate your time to help your local committee.

Write to, 2 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AR, or contact your local Cancer Research Campaign committee. You'll find them in the phone book.

After all, what's the cost of a stamp?

75,000 people are cured each year.
Give more and we can cure more.

Cancer Research Campaign.



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NEW STATESMAN

Vol 114 No 2944 28 August 1987

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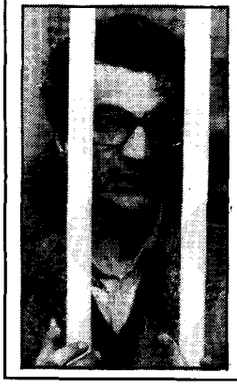
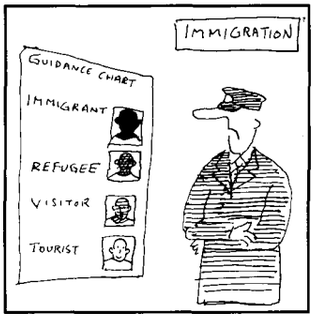


Toni Negri — leading theorist of the autonomist movements of the '70s, accused of 'armed insurrection' and now in exile in France — argues that Italy's Greens are even more significant than German Greens.
Plus: Exclusive extract from Ken Livingstone's book, education cuts and 'Is anything interesting going to happen at the TUC?'

Our illiberal democracy



THIS WEEK four Tamils who had sought asylum in Britain will find out whether they will be allowed to stay. This is not a victory for the Tamils and the rights of the refugees so much as an assertion of the rule of law over the enormous discretionary powers of the Home Office. All the High Court has done, in granting an injunction last Friday against the deportation of the Tamils, is to insist on their right to have their appeal heard in a court of law. The Home Office was happy for this right to fall into abeyance because of the shortage of appeal judges in the summer. It is this approach to law and the civil liberties of refugees which is causing such alarm among refugees and the organisations which take up their neglected cause.

It is a measure of Britain's small status that there are now fewer applications for asylum here than in almost any other country of comparable political tradition. Far from being 'flooded' with people who wish to enjoy Britain's liberal democracy, last year only 3,900 sought asylum in Britain, compared with the 15,000 who sought it in Sweden and 99,700 in West Germany.

This is what the government wants. As senior Home Office officials said to Robin Cohen for his report 'The Detention of Asylum Seekers in the UK', tough measures for those seeking asylum are necessary 'as a public indication of the difficulty of getting into the UK'. And this measure of Britain's illiberality and insularity is getting worse; treatment of refugees has become noticeably more restrictive in the last year says Barry Stoyle, head of the refugee unit at the United Kingdom Immigration Advisory Service. It makes him, at least, feel deeply ashamed.

The desire to prove that Britain does not welcome those whose lives or liberty are at risk, to show that all foreigners must be treated with distrust, is not only small-minded; it is also yet one more testament to the damaging power of a fervour against immigration. Although the government claims to stick to the letter of the law on both immigration and on refugees, the dwindling number of those seeking and receiving asylum speaks rather to a zealous enforcement of a policy of exclusion. Immigration officers, who frequently make snap and arbitrary judgments on refugees as soon as they set foot in Britain, usually see their job as one of holding back a tide of other races who threaten to 'swamp' Britain.

Immigrants seeking a better life, people wanting to join their families here and people fleeing political or religious persecution in, at the moment, Iran and Sri Lanka, are all judged through this hostile lens. They are encouraged by a popular press which is quick to describe all black foreigners as 'illegal immigrants'. Legally, all are processed under the 1971 Immigration Act with its discretionary powers of detaining people with no recourse to bail, and no right to make an appeal against deportation *inside* Britain. As Barry Stoyle says: 'It's not much comfort having a form to fill in when they're pulling out your fingernails.'

For those who have seen their friends and relatives killed and tortured, and may have been tortured themselves, such a reception is, at the least, a denial of basic humanitarian values. At the worst, even the basic elements of natural justice are denied. And Douglas Hurd has made it clear that Britain's official attitude to refugees is approaching the worst.

In 1985, a sub-committee of the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee recommended that refugees should have a right of appeal *in Britain* if they were refused asylum. The Home Office rejected this, but recommended that they should have the right to be referred to UKIAS, to be represented by an MP and to judicial review of a deportation order. In March this year, Mr Hurd told the House of Commons that none of these rights could, in future, be taken for granted.

This reversal of the government's own arguments to the House of Commons pulls away from refugees the already minimal rights they enjoy. These stem from the 1951 UN Convention under which signatory states guarantee asylum to those who have 'a well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion'. It is a Convention more fitted to protect the isolated, tormented individual than to cope with the great surges of movement from oppressive governments which have occurred, are occurring and will continue to occur across the world. At the moment that, however, exists as a problem for Britain only in fantasies about the threat of outsiders.

For refugees and their hard-pressed organisations the problem is that there are no votes in refugees, hardly even on the left, still wrestling with its thoughts on patriotism and nation states. There are, however, votes in being able to proudly announce that fewer foreigners than ever have been allowed into this small island.

It is this evocation of a small beleaguered island which can no longer afford the luxury of liberal tolerance, can no longer play its part in a world torn by political and religious oppressions, which makes a mockery of the government's equally ringing evocation of a Britain returned to 'greatness'.

Sarah Benton

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DIARY

Washington

'He'll be all on his own,' snapped the latest Democrat presidential hopeful and Mom from the Rockies, Mrs Pat Schroeder, somewhat acidly, as news reached Washington from County Galway that the fallen frontrunner Gary Hart was 'reconsidering' his campaign.

The story that wouldn't go away has now run nearly as long as Jim and Tammy Fay Bakkers' Pearlygate, and briefly blazed again last week. Hart had retreated to his favourite Irish holiday spot to write a book — something he'd always vowed to do. But before leaving he'd gone to see Elizabeth Taylor and Barbra Streisand's media consultants about his image. A reliable rumour that Hart was booked for a September date on the prestigious *Nightline* show with king news-maker Ted Koppel seemed to clinch it — enough for an August news quickie, anyway.

○

Of all the 'Seven Dwarfs', as the seven Democrat long-shot candidates are known, it is not a dwarf but Snow White, aka tough, bright, breezy Congresswoman Schroeder of Colorado, who is the future White House candidate with most to lose by the mayhem and bunkum of a Hart replay. The polls show that Hart and two other men not even in the running yet — Sam Nunn and Mario Cuomo — are still way ahead of this still forgettable race, probably because of nothing more than name-recognition.

Hart's 12-point lead apparently fooled his old Denver campaign manager Willy Dixon and Gary Hart himself. 'I think it is clearly possible and even probable that Hart will re-enter the race,' Dixon told Wisconsin radio last week. Hart then added to the confusion by neither denying nor confirming the rumour. But he can forget it. While Hart's nearest rival, Reverend Jesse Jackson, was generous enough to say 'It's the man's right — and his risk', no keen Democrat voter could be found. A collective act of amnesia would be necessary, one pointed out. In fact, there was a collective national snort of derision. 'Is he crazy?' cried Mauri Amitay, supercharmer and most successful Jewish fundraiser on Capitol Hill. Hart's backers faded away within 24 hours of L'Affaire Monkey Business, and Hart's main state backers have washed their hands of him forever. 'What in hell's gotten into Willy Dixon now?' yelled an irate ex-staffer in Seattle when I rang her with the news. 'I don't believe it.'

The 'Honk If Hart Owes You Money' bumperstickers are still around Denver, which is Mrs Schroeder's patch too. 'My first thought was that it was incredible,' said New Hampshire Democrat chairman J. Joseph Grandmaison. 'And my second thought was that it is still incredible.' Well, yes. For Europeans, what you see is a nice-looking guy with a liberal arms policy, a good record on armed services, two books including a spy thriller to his name, and the bad luck to get caught out.

○

Hart is simply non-viable in ways that are opaque to foreigners. What looks to them like a case of inane sexual McCarthyism is, in fact, another story altogether. Loner Hart was always so bad at male bonding — as distinct from the other kind — on the Senate floor that aides regularly fumed when a promise of help or a vote didn't come. And his campaign debts, to say nothing of his private life, were ever a problem.

One network reporter claims to have a list of 17 ex-Hart paramours, plus a shortlist of nine. A bureau chief here hazards a figure of several dozen. So what? Compared to JFK or Scoop Jackson and Warren Magnussen who raced each other to a woman-from-every-state or LBJ ('Move over, Nancy — this is your President speaking') it's still chickenfeed. Tempting fate by saying 'Go on: put a tail on me' to the *New York Times* is what got to his backers.

○

Cynics round this town say that the whistle got blown this time, and not on innumerable occasions before because a) a lot of the senior political campaign reporters are now women, not men hoping to find the kind of glasshouse from which stones cannot be thrown, and b) it wasn't one of the regulars this time. But more than any other reason, it is because Hart is not a clubbable man. His aloofness and occasional whackiness (one playmate was a Native American divorcée called Marilyn Youngbird who brushed his body with feathers) turned his colleagues off.

○

ROGER WODDIS

Aftermath

'My main concern is that all the possible lessons from this should be drawn and that we should add to the work which we were already doing on firearms law.' — Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary

After the shock comes the solemn parade.
Whatever they claim to love, it isn't silence:
Here are experts, the honoured makers
of laws,
Camera and mike trained on suitable pieties
And on the disinterested sellers of guns.
Nothing is louder than their deafening
concern.

All the right things are trumpeted now,
Duty demands it and the rat-race coverage.
Some must pray, others say tighten the laws,
All are vivified by Ryan's slaughter.
Was he disturbed? Are media images to
blame?
Let's pull a programme till the mourning's
over.

The important thing is not to get excited.
Horror is in order: guns in private hands
Are cause enough for the half-page leader,
But taking the longer, more demented view
(The business of government), nothing must
diminish
The licensed reciprocity of arms.

For Snow White the time has now come to run. Hart's former co-chairperson in Denver, Pat Schroeder, had been waiting in the wings to declare her candidacy, determined not to make his financial mistakes and to pay as she goes along. She shares a lot of the Hart mindset, right down to the post-'60s military reform policies and the long stint on the Armed Services Committee.

However, one of the best things about Pat Schroeder is her tart comebacks and sandpaper tongue. When asked how she felt about the monkey-business she answered with a frank grimace of her attractively angular face: 'Sick. Sick. Sick.' Her sense of betrayal was highly personal. She had been lied to. 'And would it amaze you to learn that I don't have 29-year-old men hanging around trying to impress me?'

Asked about running as a woman, she snaps back 'Do I have a choice?', but also argues that biology is destiny, for better or worse. She no longer retorts, as on her first day as a rookie congresswoman on Capitol Hill: 'I have a brain and a uterus and I use them both.' The latter has produced two kids that she is not seeing enough of. The former has opened up the women as politician debates again — none of your Geraldine Farraro euphoria this time: it's something she has to fight.

○

Snow White has also resorted to that 1988 elections essential, the image consultant. She has been told to ditch her girlish fringe, stop running around on her bicycle and quit saying things like 'golly' and 'doggonit'. Not only did she turn all these suggestions down, she told a bunch of Iowans recently 'you've turned up the humidity in here and my hair is going curly, curly, curly.' The time she wore a bunny-suit to China in order to hand out presents to embassy kids still haunts her. Mr Schroeder's boast that he did three loads of laundry the other night is haunting him. 'My biggest fear in life is losing my housekeeper . . . And my male colleagues never understand,' she wails, and it's probably a mistake.

○

But yes, it will be a lot of fun having Snow White around, if she makes her $2 million goal in time for her September starting gun ('No dough, no go'). Like everyone else in the race, she'd be properly stymied if Hart comes back. But he won't. America's loss is literature's gain. It was Schroeder who pointed out that nobody came to Hart's defence after his fall from grace with Donna Rice. Schroeder was the first not to defend him.

In this game anything can happen, of course. And we now await a dark-horse finale, where a total outsider will gallop right through at the last minute, as happened with Abraham Lincoln. Will they manage to drag Sam Nunn in, kicking and screaming? Probably. Will Mrs Schroeder be ideal vice-presidential timber? Probably, since she'll take care of the left. But let's face it, after Ferraro merely passing the physical is no longer enough.

Elgy Gillespie

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Survival of Homo Rhodesiens

Harare

THOSE WHITES who fought so hard and defied so much of the world to save their political dominance in what was once Rhodesia — the more thoughtful among them certainly — have now welcomed the loss of their 30 reserved parliamentary seats which have stood these past seven years between Robert Mugabe and untrammelled majority rule.

There has been no rush to travel or freight agencies. And there has been no sudden spate of vacancies in the upper reaches of commerce and industry which are still peopled by the latterday mutants of Homo Rhodesiens these many days since the great black tide crossed the Zambezi River.

In the past never to be confused with the wise of the species, Homo Rhodesiens has now, finally, acquiesced to the logic of history and of its own self-interest.

How so, this dramatic evolution?

The constitutional amendment bill which was swept through Zimbabwe's House of Assembly last week is intended to empower President Canaan Banana to set a date on which the 20 reserved Assembly seats and 10 Senate posts, given whites under the Lancaster House agreement which brought Zimbabwe to independence in 1980, are to be considered vacant. The remaining 80 black-elected MPs will then draft in replacements, who will sit until the first fully non-racial general election, due in 1990.

Mugabe is known to want to include a few white notables among these replacements — whites who can combine general support for his gently transformatory policies with the political confidence of their community.

What this means is, finally, the political end of the antediluvian Ian Smith and Co. Not only will whites no longer have a distinctive political profile, but, more important, they will no longer be seen to be represented by the antagonistic former Rhodesian rebel leader who miscalculated the length of white rule by a mere 996 years.

The history of this century is littered with examples of the danger posed by readily identifiable economic élites who lack political power but whose political intentions might be interpreted by the majority as the subversion of the national mandate.

Zimbabwe's 120,000 economically powerful whites face exactly this danger. Hence the thinking among their more thoughtful kind: the lower our political profile, the better.

The central issue as far as they are concerned is to retain their economic hold. This may bring them into conflict with the government and populace at large at some point in the remote future when socialist re-construction is perhaps put firmly on the agenda. But in the medium term at least, the issues are essentially patriotic — about the elements of nation building. Hence the whites' demure attitude to the loss of their electoral privileges. Hence, too, the way in which eight white MPs felt able to join Mugabe's and Joshua Nkomo's parties in ditching the provision which, in the years immediately following black rule, gave whites an illusory though psychologically important feeling that they still had some institutional political power.

That illusion was a major factor in saving Zimbabwe from the terrible economic dislocation which could have resulted from an exodus of those skills and that capital which the colonial era had largely awarded whites alone.

Whether from a capitalist or a socialist perspective — and who but the a-historical would not agree the victor has still to be determined — therein lies the brilliance of the constitution drawn up at Lancaster House.

Howard Barrell

Unity, but on what?

IT MAY LOOK like another intricate Labour Party squabble, but the current split in the party's 'soft' left signifies more than the propensity of two or more members to form factions if they are put in a room together. It could determine the posture of the Labour Party at the next election — especially its attitude to a merged Alliance party.

To recap, the fissure was opened after the general election in Labour's 'soft' left in parliament, the Tribune Group, when it decided by 37 to 27 not to vote for a joint list of MPs for the shadow cabinet with the 'hard' left Campaign Group. This was as much to do with power politics as with principle, because Tribune now speaks for a majority of Labour MPs without the Campaign Group's help.

But the differences of principle are being teased out further in Labour's 'soft' left outside parliament, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, which was a 'Bennite' and is now a 'Kinnockite' pressure group.

Last week, Ken Livingstone MP, a semi-detached member of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, took to these pages to argue for 'unity' between soft and hard lefts and 'no deal with the Liberals' (Peter Kellner replies, Letters p25). A similar statement appeared in *Tribune*, signed also by three other 'soft' lefties, Joan Ruddock (MP for Deptford, former CND Chairperson and friend of the Kinnocks), George Galloway (MP for Glasgow Hillhead) and Peter Hain, and by three representatives from the 'hard' left coalition, Labour Left Liaison.

This 'unity' statement provoked an angry and almost instant counterblast from 40 members of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee, mostly working in local councils and trade unions. It said:

> Our over-riding concern for the foreseeable future is working for the election of a Labour government. This can only be accomplished by unifying the Labour Party around its current leadership, and working in co-operation to create the vision, and the means of achieving it, of a society for the 1990s and beyond, based on freedom, justice, democracy and equality. Therefore we reject this 'new unity' with those forces on the hard left and Trotskyist left in the party who are not prepared to work as one united party towards these ends.

To decode this at the level of local government, which is the principal activity of local Labour parties with any bearing on the real world, it means that 'soft' lefties are fed up with the postures and tactics of the 'hard' left, usually proposing illegal defiance of central government restrictions on local council finances. And the softies are winning: they see no reason for national figures to make concessions to the hard left for the sake of a romantic idea of 'left unity'.

As one of the *bolshevik* (Russian: majority) tendency of the Tribune Group of MPs says, the 15 points of the Livingstone 'unity initiative' have nothing in them 'that means anything to the ordinary public'. The points around which soft and hard lefts are urged to unite include 'strengthening links with socialists in unions not affiliated to the Labour Party' and a commitment to an 'independent socialist foreign policy'.

But isn't responding to the 'unity initiative' in the same way — with a 'correct' ideological statement signed by a list of 'correct' people — being just as negative and narrow as the 'hard' left? Ian Wilmore, one of the organisers of the counterblast, sighs: 'If you're faced with someone trying to run ten steps backward, stopping them from doing that is a step forward.'

John Rentoul

Good morning, campers

BRITAIN'S only remaining prisoner-of-war camp is to be converted into a holiday resort for schoolchildren. More akin to Colditz than Butlins, this approach to child recreation means that youngsters will be bedded down in Second World War cells, frogmarched for inspection duty at the crack of dawn and drilled to the 'cookhouse' for morning 'grub'.

'We'll bawl and shriek at the blitters,' promised the Yorkshire millionaire behind the venture. 'They won't be made to wear uniforms but my men will be dressed as British military guards who have instructions to treat the children as PoWs. After all, children these days need a bit of discipline.' Stan Johnson is the owner of Eden Camp, currently a museum set in six acres of derelict land in Malton, North Yorkshire.

Eden is hardly the Original garden most parents might expect for their children, but the new holiday resort is due to open early next year, and will accommodate 300 schoolchildren at any one time — or so Johnson hopes. 'Once the schoolchildren are here, they'll be well looked after and totally secure,' he said, pointing at the watch towers, barbed wire fencing and military guards at the gates.

Johnson, a true entrepreneur, first bought the site to replace the prisoner-of-war huts with a food processing factory, but then 'the mist came down and I was taken back to the Second World War, and I knew immediately that I should preserve the place'. Since Eden Camp opened in March this year more than 4,000 visitors have passed through the sentry gates at £2.50 a time.

But the mist may have clouded Johnson's judgment of its potential as a children's holiday resort. 'I don't think I'd like to send my children here. I shudder to think what would happen to my eight-year-old if he were to remain here for a holiday,' said Christopher Lewis, father of two and headmaster of a nearby comprehensive. The

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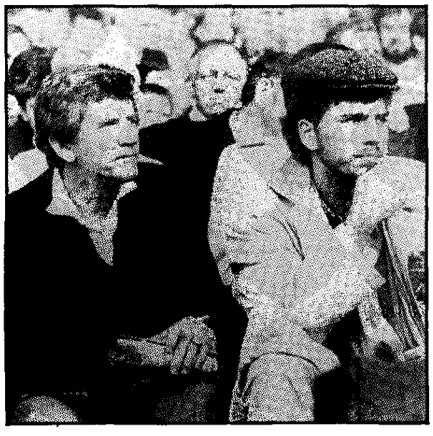
Lewis family had just emerged from the 'what it's like to be in a German U-boat while it's being attacked' exhibition at the museum. Among other things it featured an assortment of drowning dummies seen fighting for survival through grubby portholes.

'I don't think it's very exciting or amusing to pack loads of schoolchildren into a prisoner-of-war camp, the museum is frightening enough,' said Mrs Jane Stockes from Brighton. Her three children had just spent an entertaining half hour wandering through the 'Blitz' exhibition, which featured among burst water pipes, leaping flames and ear-piercing sirens, a family of electronically-operated rats crawling over a bombshelled sofa. The children described the Blitz show as 'really ace'.

Barbara Altounyan

If the caption fits

No 32



'It's my *son*! And that's my story and I'm sticking to it.' Captions or thinks bubbles please, by Gary Hart or his offspring (watching Gaelic football in Dublin), to reach the *NS* by Monday 6 September. The winner gets a ten-pound book token, runners-up just the glory.

No 30: winner

Police officer (outside the Dulwich Thatcherdome): 'I think these are the diagrams for Denis's break-dancing lessons.' (*D. McPherson, Stowmarket.*) Runners-up: 'I think we should dig it up and sell it to the Tate.' (*Katie Mallett, Canvey Island.*) 'I dunno . . . she just seemed to give them a withering look.' (*Noel Petty, Stockton-on-Tees.*)

Labour after the Kirk

Bernard Crick provides an historical perspective on Labour's Scottish dilemma, to be discussed at a conference in Edinburgh this weekend organised by the Labour Campaign for a Scottish Assembly.

TIME WAS when I would teach from an English podium with the best of them that Great Britain was a centralised sovereign state and politically homogenous — well, more or less. This always meant either ignoring Northern Ireland, or thinking 'if it doesn't fit our model, off with it'. But all this began to wear thin in the early 1970s. Certainly the English influence is immense, but then the Scottish National Party is not simply an exceptional and additional territorial party. It has influenced the behaviour and policies of its opponents, especially the Labour Party in Scotland — or, as it is rapidly becoming, the Scottish Labour Party.

I am a citizen of a state with no agreed colloquial name. Our passports pedantically call us citizens of 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland'. The acid test of identity is how one replies to the interrogatory command in a foreign hotel register, 'Nationality?' If the question is simply meant to establish our legal citizenship, then the answer 'British' is correct, yet it is the least used colloquially. So many write 'Scottish' or 'Welsh'. Citizenship and nationality do not coincide easily in mainland Great Britain. And when some write 'Irish', one knows their religious identity.

The majority write 'English'. The majority of UK passport-holders are English, but I suspect that many write 'English' not to assert a clear national identity, as do the Scots and the Welsh, but out of mistaken belief that 'English' is synonymous with 'British', or the 'Great Britain' of the passport. That's the real trouble. When Mrs Thatcher intones 'sovereignty' and the 'United Kingdom' when refusing to negotiate with the Argentines, trying to reassure Ulster Unionists, or rubbishing devolution, she puts the stress on 'United'; but she forgets that this very word points to the lack of a clear national name and arose because the 'Kingdom', or legal realm, was and is a federation of different nations. When this is forgotten or not taken seriously by the English majority, trouble is in store. Trouble *is* in store.

Even before the political threat of the SNP (now faded but rousable if Labour cannot wear the national mantle with panache and plausibility), it was a matter of fact, however ignored in English textbooks, that Scotland had its own administration, its own local government, educational and legal systems. A different history is taught in the schools. So for a decade at least, even before I came to live in Scotland, I began teaching that the United Kingdom must be seen as a 'quasi-federal entity': that to hold it together, substantial concessions had had to be and still have to be made, outside the theory of the centralised sovereign state.

The old British governing class was aware of this. Patronising each nation was state policy and a high political art, in which the royal family was used most effectively. Even in recent Tory times Welsh nationalists who caused, or even threatened, 'trouble' could get big concessions from Westminster in language, education and the vinegar-sop of Harlech television.

But Thatcherites are totally unhistorical. This makes them so bold and so reckless. Anomalies should be ignored or swept away. Yet the national spirit in Scotland, if rarely as intense as in parts of Wales, is far more widespread and is undivided by the language issue: a tougher nut to crack or conciliate.

Since 80 per cent of Scots now want either a devolved Assembly or an independent parliament, the case is strong in terms of democracy not to deny them devolution of some kind. Separatism is a plaid herring. A Scottish parliament, as many Nats will privately admit, would more likely diminish than multiply them. Most of them are (like me) covert federalists — wise enough to know that separation and 'complete independence' is, in the modern European economy, somewhere between meaningless and impossible. But the strongest case is historical. It lies in the very nature and origins of the modern British state.

The Act of Union of 1707 did not create a unified state in a 19th-century mould. It was hard bargaining between two nations. The Scots call it the 'Treaty of Union'. Modern historians see the old accounts of a patriotic parliament selling itself for English gold as romantic moonshine. By and large the lowland Scots got what they wanted: access to the English economy, protection against the highlanders, the Stuarts and the Pope, and the establishment in law of their Presbyterian Church. Most Scots cared more for their Kirk than for their Parliament. They saw the Parliament mainly as a corrupt preserve of aristocratic landowners, whereas the Kirk, electing its local ministers and its Assembly, was the pre-eminent Scottish national and popular institution. Until late in the last century it was the conscience, the educator and for most practical purposes the government of the people.

Now that the power of the Kirk has withered away, only a parliament can maintain the balance of national interests in the Union. National feeling is strong, but there are few genuine national institutions — no longer even an influential national newspaper — only the Scottish Office itself. If there were not already administrative devolution, the case for political devolution would be weaker. But administrative devolution is no modern contrivance: it is a direct consequence of the Act or Treaty of Union.

All this has put 'devolution' on the political agenda again, and has created five pressing dilemmas for the Labour Party in Scotland: how far to distance itself from Walworth Road HQ, how far the draft bill should go, how far to pursue Parnellite tactics (in and out of parliament), how far to co-operate with other parties, and what role to play if an unsanctioned constitutional convention is called.

The Labour Party finds constitutional thinking painful and Scottish actions will call the bluff of any merely rhetorical adherence to the new anti-centralist version of democratic socialism.

Bernard Crick

Correction

In our issue of 14 August, an article on child abuse, 'The hounding of Bell', referred to '*Insight*, the newsletter of social services directors'. In fact, *Social Services Insight* is a magazine with an audited circulation of nearly 20,000, independent of any group.

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ROGER LIDDLE

Democracy David Owen style: heads I win, tails I split the party

I TRIED TO FORGET the SDP this August, and largely succeeded. My calm reflection of the Tuscan countryside was undisturbed by international phone calls. Only my holiday reading occasioned a stray thought or two — and they put the SDP crisis in longer perspective.

Bernard Donoghue's *Prime Minister*[1] revived my spirits. There were happy memories of more influential days when, from my office opposite a Secretary of State's, I devoured Cabinet papers with the eagerness of a keen night editor for the first editions. However, his description of the last Labour government was a timely reminder of the central Alliance case. Labour on its own is not and cannot become a credible alternative. For the Callaghan government collapsed from within, abdicating authority before it was defeated at the polls, a prisoner of Labour's own internal contradictions.

Government is more than slick public relations. Why should essential lightweights like Kinnock and Gould (despite his cleverness) succeed in managing what remains the unmanageable, when heavyweights like Callaghan and Healey found the task too much?

After a lazy afternoon of Donoghue, Dalton's diaries[2] gave days of satisfaction. But one thought struck home. In his long political life many mavericks — Mosley, Cripps, even Bevan — burst upon the scene, for a time dominated the stage before, as with all prima donnas, the audience rumbled their act. Yet the central enduring character of the diaries is Attlee. Dalton privately mocked him as 'Rabbit' or 'the little man'. But as leader of a great reformist coalition, he had one great quality: he knew his limitations. Attlee was not afraid to surround himself with big men.

This summer David Owen has classed himself among the mavericks, not the leaders. At the decisive moment, fatal flaws have got the better of his undoubted qualities.

There have been worrying signs all along. A leader in the Attlee mould would have been a team builder. Instead of turning his back on the Gang of Four (who posed him no threat) he would have promoted Shirley Williams' magnetism on television, drawn heavily on Roy Jenkins' economic experience — an area where untypically he lacks feel — and employed Bill Rodgers' talents as a political strategist. Instead of keeping the Liberals in parliament at a distance — and then complaining afterwards that they proposed silly things — he would have ensured throughout that the Alliance had in place a team of joint spokespeople supported by the talented policy experts the Alliance can command.

BUT IT ALWAYS had to be a David Owen show, not a team show. That lies at the heart of his attitude to merger. Of course Liberals at times can be wrong-headed and tiresome — as can we all. Maybe in more authoritarian parties the leader can treat such people with the contempt he thinks they deserve. But in a movement of conscience and reform such attitudes fail the test of leadership at the first hurdle.

The lengths David Owen is prepared to go in order to maintain his independence are now clear. In the SDP ballot 57 per cent voted for merger negotiations with the Liberals: 43 per cent for closer links — 0 per cent voted for separation. Indeed, when Shirley Williams proposed that third option for the ballot, the Owenites blocked her. But their actions now reveal the basis of the anti-merger campaign to be a barefaced fraud. All these members who voted against merger either out of personal loyalty, or because they objected to being bounced or felt merger was premature, have been taken for a ride.

'Amicable separation' is an arrogant slap in the face for one-member-one-vote. David Owen has re-defined the principle of majority decisions in an interesting new way. 'I win: you shove off. You win: I split the party.'

> ***'The logic of Owen's self-imposed isolation will take him further and further to the populist right. But the odds are against the splinter group taking off'***

This attitude cavalierly spurns the yearning for unity within the SDP, the only basis for which can be to give the negotiations with the Liberals a fair wind and see what results. My hope (and David Owen's fear) is that we can ultimately persuade 90 per cent of SDP members to join the Alliance. But if a splinter group pre-empts those negotiations or insists in going it alone despite their successful outcome, they must face some political facts of life.

Some Owenites naively imagine that an electoral alliance can be reconstructed between their group and the new Alliance. They kid themselves that somehow or other at local level these national upheavals won't make much difference.

Maybe at the end of the day some limited pact might emerge, though I do not regard it as likely. But the young and politically ambitious, tempted by the Owen charisma, should beware. Apart from sitting MPs, the splinter group could lay claim to only two winnable seats: Blyth Valley and Plymouth Drake. They would be hard pressed to fight 30 seats in all. The name of the game is providing David Owen with a platform in parliament, not helping his supporters to get there.

But sentiment apart, why should the new Alliance agree to such an electoral arrangement? The Owenite rationale is that the new Alliance won't be sound on policy, can't be trusted with the nation's defences, isn't committed to the social market. How can this be the basis for a new partnership in which, to quote the silken words of the Owen amendment for next week's Portsmouth conference, we 'heal wounds and enable all our members to participate amicably in the task of realigning British politics'?

SOME OWENITES will say we don't care what damage we do: we're going to stick to our social democratic principles, come what may. This is the point of the argument which moves me from tears to anger. I resent being portrayed as one of those wimps who, because they believe in the creation of an effective third force in British politics, are prepared to sell their social democratic convictions down the river. I can only shake my head in disbelief and make two points.

First, for the record, David Owen has no monopoly of either social democratic robustness or consistency. At the SDP Policy Committee, I remember recoiling with horror when he told us in 1982 that arguments between unilateralism and multilateralism were outdated. (Bill Rodgers had to threaten to resign to persuade him to back deployment of cruise missiles, when his acolytes misled him that the tide of SDP opinion was running the other way.) In the last parliament, the central question of incomes strategy was never properly addressed: the proposal for a tax on inflationary pay rises was out, in, then out again and finally half-heartedly in. (I suspect it's now regarded as 'old hat'.) Poverty was a classic cock-up. David Owen insisted on rushing out Dick Taverne's draft policy to grab the silly-season headlines. When those headlines rebounded, he ran this way and that. On his instructions no family on less than £17,000 a year was to lose, yet the Liberals were rubbished for trying to ditch the SDP's poverty commitments. Small wonder that when the election came, our policy was buried in small print.

Second, I would hazard a forecast. David Owen's *Face the Future* was an impressive if untidy compendium of the social democratic 'state of the art' in 1981. My guess is that the manifesto of the new Alliance will show a much clearer line of development from that book than the policies of any Owenite splinter group. For the logic of Owen's self-imposed isolation will take him further and further to the populist right.

I still hope it won't happen — that the odds against the splinter group will guarantee it never gets off the ground. But Social Democrats should be in no doubt of the best way to ensure this. The chances of creating a strong and effective third force will be the greater, the sooner we all put David Owen behind us.

Off to Portsmouth this weekend . . . wish I was back in Tuscany. □

Roger Liddle is a member of the Council for Social Democracy, and was special adviser to Bill Rodgers, Minister of Transport 1976-79.

[1] *Prime Minister — the conduct of policy under Harold Wilson and James Callaghan*, Jonathan Cape £10.95.

[2] *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton*, edited by Ben Pimlott, Jonathan Cape £40.

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From esprit de corps to 'dead fish eyes'

GEOFFREY BROAD *describes the uncomfortable reality behind the dream of 'Japanising' the British workplace, while* **CHARLES GRANT** *argues that Japan is not the model for 'global economic hegemony' that we think it is*

BBC2 Brass Tacks

Workers at Komatsu's Newcastle factory are drilled in Japanese company commitment — a stereotype that conceals as much as it reveals

THE JAPANESE are coming, the Japanese are coming . . . the Japanese are here. Whether viewed as trojan horse or new management paradigm, media hype has projected an image of the Japanese multi-national as a 'good employer' which places a greater emphasis on human relations in a strictly disciplined work environment. So-called pioneering single-union and strike-free agreements, though controversial, have been heralded as deals that will break the mould of British industrial relations. Company uniforms, single status and physical jerks sessions have added to the generally positive portrayal of Japanese firms setting new standards in efficiency, along with the emphasis on consensual management and fuller participation by employees.

But there are signs that, as Japanese subsidiaries consolidate their production base, they are having to face the challenge of managing in a quite different industrial relations culture. British workforces too are adjusting to the realities of working under Japanese managerial control. Recent press reports from Nissan's Sunderland car plant spoke of 'low morale', 'lack of consultation' and a 'frenetic pace of work'. Firms in the electronics sector have high absenteeism.

Some Japanese firms have not been successful in introducing team working and quality circles. Shopfloor employees are not the only people to feel discontent. British managers are grappling with the problems of working at the inter-face with Japanese managers and advisors who define their roles and responsibilities differently. A reluctance to conform to Japanese expectations on working hours highlights these concerns. As one general manager of an electronics subsidiary put it to me:

> Japanese managers put the company before everything. As for me I have a family and this is more important, even though my friends call me a workaholic. A UK workaholic is a pale shadow compared with most Japanese managers. When it's 7pm I'm going home regardless of whether the Japanese managers are still in the office . . . except if they need me to handle a crisis, which is quite often.

Frustrations are also surfacing over the small amount of training given and the weak voice that employees have in determining pay. Hitachi employees recently endorsed a pay increase only after the first industrial action in the plant. A highly motivated workforce, committed single-mindedly to the company and its goals, may prove much more difficult to achieve in the UK than some optimists believed possible. But how much do we know about the reality of the oft-quoted 'harmonious' work environment in Japan itself? The stereotyped image we have of day-to-day factory life in Japan has perhaps been accepted too uncritically in the West and should now be reassessed.

Lifetime employment in Japan is confined to an elite of male graduates, technicians and skilled manual workers whose pay, job security and promotion chances are relatively high. These employees are concentrated in the giant corporations and comprise only some 30 per cent of total employment, though they are estimated to pocket around 50 per cent of total earned income. For the majority of employees in the service and small firms sectors everyday work life is often less secure and more arduous.

Participation in quality circles (regarded by many workers here as unpaid overtime) is tied into a personal appraisal system for pay increases and promotion. Junior management and a hierarchy of foremen, who have themselves been promoted from the lower ranks, assess employee attitude and effort and recommend names for promotion, re-training and bonus pay. This reinforces the authority of supervisors who control what might be described as shopfloor 'fiefdoms'. It is they and not the union shop steward who are expected to prevent problems arising and to settle grievances. Studies show that the shopfloor in Japanese manufacturing is perhaps the most closely supervised in the world.

Company *esprit de corps*, conformity, and 'healthy' competition among teams and departments are part of everyday work life. Not all workers are enthusiastic participants but team leaders (junior supervisors) provide counselling at work, and at home if necessary, for dissatisfied group members. Transfers are offered for those who do not fit in. Like promotion, bonus payments (paid twice yearly and which can total

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30-50 per cent of basic pay) are linked to team performance. There is intense competition among temporary workers for regular work.

Induction and training for new recruits is handled with military strictness and accommodation in dormitories housing hundreds of single male employees is the norm. One new Japanese graduate employee of a large steel corporation told me he had at first high hopes of a career in which his individual aspirations and interests would be fully considered: 'I was told that I should obey my superiors at all times even when I felt them to be wrong. After three months I realised that I had to conform to what my boss wanted. This is what we call "dead fish eyes".'

Life in the fast lane

Only in rare cases has the shopfloor view of work experience in Japanese firms been aired in the West. The celebrated, if not infamous exposé of Satoshi Kamata (*Japan in the Passing Lane*, Unwin) is one of the few books which document work life, in this case on the Toyota assembly line. This is recommended reading and an exceptional account of the alienation and oppressive work discipline typical in Japanese industry. Few academic researchers in Japan are given access to situations where everyday work experiences can be investigated. Fear of social or company disapproval make the small bars and eating houses the only acceptable alternative for research interviews.

A production manager who had spent a year at the firm's head office in Japan now has a clearer picture of the Japanese system.

> Before going to Japan I had a mental picture of life working for a Japanese firm. This was of a distinctively different management style, of consensus, lots of participation and harmonious industrial relations. I now know that this was at best only a partial picture and that there is a much less agreeable face of Japanese work life.

What might this mean for understanding what is currently happening in Japanese firms in the UK? It seems that Japanese management in the UK is trying to develop a factory culture which in many respects is based on Japanese management principles. The consultation councils, quality circles and physical jerks sessions symbolise this. These techniques appear to be aimed at moving away from the supposedly 'adversarial' features of British workplace industrial relations. But might Japanese managers have misinterpreted the ways conflicts are customarily handled in the British workplace?

In Japan the hierarchy of status and authority means that managers and supervisors expect to be obeyed without question. This is hardly the convention in the British workplace. For Japanese employees who hope to be employed for a lifetime, energetic participation in the firm is viewed as a duty and an obligation. In Japan obligations are reinforced by the work team whose status hierarchy ensures that all 'pull together on the same rope'. Given that most shop stewards are actually among the lower ranks of management and enterprise union leaders are often in middle management levels the expression of individual grievances tends to be damped down. This contrasts sharply with the way most British employees expect to be free to express individual and collective opinions and grievances, *even in non-unionised firms*. UK workers, including managers, are clearly not taking readily to the control structures in Japanese subsidiaries. Most junior managers still expect to move out to move up.

Late-night decisions

At one expanding electronics firm where the management had confidence enough to allow me full access it was possible to run an in-depth survey of workers' attitudes. On communications and participation there was a clear distinction between the *camaraderie* when the factory first opened and the present atmosphere. Then the Japanese managers relied more on UK managers' and supervisors' knowledge — a time when direct face-to-face communication was feasible. With growth, new communications problems arose as the organisation developed more departments, more levels of management and where employees in post were overlooked for promotion by new appointees.

Though personal relations with Japanese managers are good, many British managers felt that they are excluded from the real decision-making processes, many of which take place late into the night or in social gatherings of Japanese managers and advisors. Consensus appears to be a process which has to be 'sold' to the workforce *after* decisions are taken. Japanese managers, even if their command of English is good, are reluctant to make decisive 'spot' decisions without further discussions with other managers and superiors. As *their* immediate boss makes a regular report on them, they are often afraid to 'stand out' by taking individual initiatives and risk making a mistake.

The Japanese, though, are not disillusioned and morale is high that in the long run they will succeed in re-educating British managers and workers as illustrated by this quote by a senior manager at another electronics subsidiary:

> I am optimistic that we will succeed over 10 years or so. European managements are 'mature' managements and we should take account of this. But we must start with the Japanese way because this is a Japanese company. Later we will develop a hybrid style that is the best of Japanese and the best of British. The main problem is that British managers as yet do not understand the Japanese way so we have to send them to Japan to learn this. They can then adapt these to the UK context.

The debate about the transferability of Japanese working practices will probably intensify, especially if Japanese managers seek to impose Japanese thinking to solve UK situations. It is difficult to gauge whether the sour reports from Nissan workers recently reported are exaggerated. What is clear is that introducing even limited aspects of Japanese-style management has to be selective, carefully thought out and implemented with the co-operation and real participation of both UK managers and shopfloor representatives. Without carrying the workforce with them, new Japanese-style working practices are, in the long run, likely to fail.

Geoffrey Broad, Lecturer in Industrial Relations, University of Salford, is researching Japanese industrial relations in the UK and Japan.

The sun sets in the East

***Don't over-rate the Japanese economy, warns* CHARLES GRANT**

LIKE MOST BRITS, I embarked on my first trip to Japan expecting to discover the economic Mecca — a vigorous, thrusting economy, preparing for global economic hegemony. When I got there, I was surprised to see rampant overstaffing and inefficiency. Walk into an office of any large compay or bank, and you notice that apparently uncontrollable piles of paper fill the desks and that there is very little automation. Japanese offices look as badly run as their factories look efficient.

Japan's industrial strength is being inexorably undermined by low-wage economies such as South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Twenty years from now, Japan is unlikely to lead the world in cars, cameras and chips. The high-tech end of manufacturing — such as digital audio tape and fax machines in cars — will not be capable of supporting the whole economy. Like all maturing economies, Japan will only be able to maintain its position if it can succeed in the service sector. So far, Japan shows very little sign — outside financial services, of which more later — of developing internationally-competitive service industries.

Japanese television programmes are second-rate — even more blood and guts than on American TV — and unexportable. Books and magazines are generally of low quality. Advertising agencies appear unable or unwilling to seek international business: three of America's biggest five advertising agencies are British-owned, none is Japanese-owned. And though the young love Kate Bush and the Stranglers, the best of Japanese rock music sounds like a school band on a bad night.

Japan's cultural exports are handicapped by its language (with its three alphabets and several thousand characters). But this homogeneous and insular nation suffers from a more fundamental problem when it comes to competing in any industry or service which places a premium on individual creativity. Japanese culture frowns on anyone who steps out of line. There is a Japanese saying: 'If a nail sticks out, hammer it back in.'

First the family and then school suppress individuality. An English woman who taught English in Hiroshima told me: 'You cannot get Japanese children to ask questions. They learn everything by rote. Lessons in Japan involve no element of pupil-participation or pupils learning to discover things themselves.' The education system smothers the creative, initiative-taking side of children. This woman now markets English-as-a-foreign-language textbooks in Japan. The English teachers she visits cannot *speak* English so she has to communicate in Japanese.

But what about banks?

The Japanese mentality may militate against success in some services, but surely they are world leaders in finance? It is true that seven of the world's eight largest banks are Japanese, and that Japanese broking firms dominate the league tables for arranging and underwriting new issues of Eurobonds. But that simply reflects the Japanese economy's huge current account surplus (about

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$100 billion last year). The current account surplus has been recycled into foreign lending by Japanese banks; in particular into supporting America's $200 billion budget deficit.

All that is impressive is the muscle. Take away that capital surplus — which is already declining a little as the stronger Yen hits Japanese exports — and Japanese banks and securities firms will be deprived of the force which has made them seem important.

Japanese firms are way behind in the art of money management and arranging mergers and acquisitions. The chief financial officer of NYK, the leading Japanese shipping line, told me that for advice on NYK's dealing in financial markets, he uses Kleinwort Benson, the British merchant bank. Nissan, similarly, finds non-Japanese financial firms better value for complex new financial products: it used Citibank to swap some Mexican debt into a local equity investment.

The apparent success of firms like Nomura in international finance has been based on its domestic business. Its Eurobond issues have been largely borrowings by Japanese companies placed with Japanese investors. It is hard to see how Japanese firms can compete for genuinely international business while they maintain archaic management practices. All Japanese banks and securities firms promote by seniority not ability. None allows women more than menial positions. All are hierarchical and take decisions only after long discussions have produced a consensus view. That is not a recipe for success in the quick-moving world of electronic financial markets.

Even Japanese manufacturing has been over-rated. In chemicals, for instance, the parochial nature of much Japanese industry shows up. Most Japanese chemicals firms export less than 5 per cent of their output, against 50-80 per cent for most British firms. The technology of Japanese chemicals companies is often out of date. Britain's BOC bought Osaka Gas this year, and found that its plant was 40 years old. In BOC, no machinery is over 15 years old. Held back by elderly plant and overstaffing, the Japanese chemicals industry is much less profitable than that in Europe. Take one of their leading firms, Mitsubishi Chemical. Its profit margin (that is profits as a percentage of sales) is 3.7 per cent. ICI regularly achieves a profit margin of 13 to 15 per cent.

None of this means that the Japanese economy will not remain powerful. Japan's net external assets have topped $300 billion and will provide a nice income (if not the jobs) to compensate for the decline of heavy industries. But before we throw in the towel and invite Japan Inc to buy Britain, we should remember that the Japanese economy has its own weaknesses. These will become more apparent as the age of manufacturing gives way to the age of services. Japan's rigid social discipline and its ethos of hard work and conformity were ideal for running factories efficiently. But in the next century, when manufacturing will be seen as a *passé* occupation best left to newly-industrialising countries, Japan's inward-looking society may be more a hindrance than a help. Signs of cracks in Japan's social discipline are still few and far between. Until it shatters, the Japanese will never be capable of making anything as non-conformist as Monty Python programmes. □

Charles Grant writes for the Economist.

PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

How to be 'viewy' and survive

Peter Hennessy

WHEN IT COMES to putting rulers and their advisers on the couch and explaining their inadequacies, self-delusions and evasions, *the* world expert is Yehezkel Dror, Professor of Political Science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In a fascinating contribution to a new volume, *Advising the Rulers*,[1] he produces a judgement which, at first sight, would apply to at least some members of Mrs Thatcher's team, though Professor Dror himself does not make the connection.

'If the ruler is committed to an ideology', he writes, 'his closer advisers will engage in iconoclasm and radicalism against former policies and civil service inertia, but usually not in respect of the ideology or the "pet ideas" of the ruler himself'. Dror is as skilled as any Telecom engineer when it comes to unravelling what he calls 'the internal wiring of the "rulership black box"'.

As chance would have it, Dror's Law of partial radicalism and iconoclasm can be applied to Mrs Thatcher's Downing Street black box thanks to a prize-winning essay from David Willetts who left her No 10 Policy Unit last year, 'a shadowy body', he calls it, 'about which little has been written'.[2] Willetts was a career civil servant in the Treasury from 1978 until 1984 when he was seconded to Downing Street. He is honest about his own penchant for free markets and his belief that 'nobody would wish to join the Unit unless they relished the prospect of working with this Prime Minister'. The fact that he is now Director of Studies at the Centre for Policy Studies — the Conservative think-tank set up by Mrs Thatcher — suggests that the relish was reciprocated.

There is plenty of *prima facie* evidence to support Dror's Law in Willetts' essay (which carried off last year's Haldane Prize awarded by the Royal Institute of Public Administration). Take, for example, the tests applied by the Policy Unit specialists (each one of the seven shadows two or three ministries and themes) when a department submits a paper to Mrs Thatcher:

- Is there a less interventionist solution which has not been properly considered or has been wrongly rejected?
- Is there a less expensive option?
- Are the arguments consistent?
- What is the evidence to back them up?
- Are there other relevant facts which the Prime Minister needs to know?

The first two criteria might strike one as ideologically driven. Willetts, a combative professional economist, has his answer:

> The average Whitehall civil servant may have a view of the world which tends to believe in the public sector's basic rationality and capacity to do things, so he may well also favour modest increases in public expenditure though nothing too extreme. Anybody who doesn't share these attitudes may stand out and be thought rather viewy.

Willetts maintains that that mildly interventionist/modest public spending attitude is itself 'viewy' and goes on the counter-offensive:

> It may be best . . . to abandon ideas of 'objectivity' though not simply to replace it with empty and cynical relativism. The best approach may be to use the terminology of the modern philosophy of economics and think in terms of the 'research programme' of an elected government. All advisers in Whitehall, whether in the Policy Unit or not, work within that research programme. The task is to do so with vigour and without sycophancy.

From what I know of him, David Willetts is not one of nature's sycophants. I doubt, however, if his 'research programme' notion works for the career civil service as a whole. Policy-making is not like that. It's not comparable to working down-the-line on, say, a weapons project like Trident, once ministers have decided to procure it. Such an approach, though, is probably both desirable and inevitable in the No 10 Policy Unit whatever the character and the political colouration of the prime ministerial patron.

The members of the Unit themselves are operating in a competitive market. As Willetts says, Mrs Thatcher doesn't have to read their papers: 'The Prime Minister can skip anything written by the Policy Unit and the work of government will continue.' This is not true of a department of state. She may not like a departmental paper but she simply cannot consign it to the 'Secret Waste' unread. And every member of the Policy Unit has the vision of a tumbril at the back of their minds — the one which carried the members of the Central Policy Review Staff to the scaffold in 1983. Their crimes, in Willetts' tabulation of the charges, being a donnish detachment from hard, day-to-day decisions, the Cabinet-wide circulation of their main papers increasing the likelihood of leaks, and their power to divert Cabinet discussion in a direction unwelcome to the PM and ministers.

It looks as if the Downing Street Policy Unit is here to stay. It has now lasted longer (1974-87) than the Think Tank did (1970-83) and it comes fairly cheap at around £300,000 a year. Ironically, it's the one Wilsonian creation that has endured. In reality it is the prime minister's *cabinet*, an idea whose time has come. It's both mean and short-sighted of the Prime Minister, therefore, not to allow her fellow members of the Cabinet to have one each as well. □

[1] William Plowden (editor), *Advising the Rulers*, Blackwell, £29.50.

[2] David Willetts, 'The Role of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit', will be published in *Public Administration*, Vol. 65, No 4, Winter 1987.

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The Hidden Hand that kills

Advocates of free-market economics often ignore the real-life effects of their simplistic ideology.* SARAH BENTON *reports on the rising rate of industrial accidents, a direct result of government policy

THERE WAS AT least one good consequence of the year long miners' strike. It probably saved the lives of a dozen men, protected the bodies of up to 500 more from crippling accidents and bought for others some extra time before the onset of pneumoconiosis.

It ought to be the one good consequence of mass unemployment, which has swept so many thousands out of the old killing trades of building and heavy metal and deep sea fishing. It ought to be the best consequence of Mrs Thatcher's New Jerusalem with everyone tip tapping away on nice clean computers in nice light airy offices before tip tapping home through streets free of industry's belching chimneys and rumbling din.

A dramatic reduction in the damage done to people by their conditions of work should, especially, be the consequence of the laws and inspectors and workplace representatives on health and safety at work set up in the mid '70s to the great pride and satisfaction of the experts on working conditions.

And indeed fewer people did die from work accidents in 1985 than at the end of the 1970s. So what led David Eves, the Chief Factory Inspector, to say, introducing his report last year: 'There is disquieting evidence that things may be going seriously amiss in occupational health and safety?' Strong words in these days of compliant quangos watching nervously for the next cut.

What has caused belated but profound alarm in health and safety circles is the *rate* of fatal and serious accidents at work. In ten of the 18 industries for which figures were available, the rate of accidents per employee increased between 1984 and 1985. The rate has increased substantially in *all* categories since 1981 when a new method of gathering statistics was instituted. The trend has 'undoubtedly' been going up for some years, confirms the Health and Safety Commission press office. In some trades, like furniture and timber (117 per 100,000 employees in 1981 to 181 in 1985) or smaller metal trades (87 to 123) or the 50 per cent increase in construction, dramatically so.

It took a long time for the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) to recognise this was happening. The encouraging downward trend that followed the 1975 legislation and the ironic benefits of recession plus the hiatus in the gathering of statistics had, until last year, obscured the new, dangerous trend.

Now, for the first time since the early '80s, the HSC is making a fuss behind the scenes. It has extracted an agreement from the Department of Employment that its budget ought to be increased by £9 million to employ more factory inspectors, and is now waiting to hear whether or not the Treasury will, next month, agree.

It has also been waiting for its first meeting with the new minister, John Cope, who could not make the time to talk to the *New Statesman*. Will he champion the pressing request from the HSC, as minister responsible for health and safety? Or will he be pursuing his own track record as champion of small businesses whose interest lies in shaking off the 'burden' of state regulations?

£1,500 for a man's head

Accidents at work kill some 650 people a year and cause serious injuries to another 12,500 — and the difference between death and a major injury from a collapsing trench or a fume-filled sludge tank may be a hair's breadth or a split second. Some 900 people (1983, the latest figures) died from recognised industrial illnesses like pneumoconiosis, asbestosis and byssinosis when dust or fibres in the air destroy the worker's ability to breathe. A further 20,000 people are estimated to be suffering from illnesses related to work.

Those are the latest full figures available and, of course, they are controversial. They don't include people who eventually die from an injury received a year or more before. Statistics and definitions for work-related illnesses are notoriously poor. Many illnesses caused by dust, repetitive strain, stress or noise simply go unrecognised; part of the general poor health of working-class life.

What is so very curious in Britain is that this deadly toll exacted by working conditions excites so little comment. It's comforting to imagine that those in the North sit around wrecking their lives on fags, booze and chips rather than stand up wrecking them at work. While the death of two or three young people from heroin produces a resonant clamour for stricter policing, harsher penalties, the death of 100 people in the building industry in one year is passed over in silence.

Directors of companies in which people needlessly die need fear no penalty more serious than a fine. The average fine in 1984 was £329, and this is only for the more serious infringements; the policy of the Health and Safety Inspectorate is: advise first, prosecute in the last resort. The maximum fine available under law is anyway only £2,000. In 1985 a company which failed to provide proper guards on a plastics injection moulding machine was fined £1,500; it seems a small price for the head of the man which was crushed, killing him, in the unguarded machine.

In this Britain is out of line with Western Europe and even more so with Eastern Europe. Last month, the directors of the Chernobyl nuclear plant were sentenced to 10 years' hard labour. No years in a labour camp for the men of Townsend Thoresen who took the crucial decisions on how fast their employees should work, and how their ships should be designed.

David Eves, Chief Inspector of Factories, sums up the year 1985/86 like this:

> Economic pressures have adversely affected working conditions in many premises and an increase in the numbers of small firms and subcontracting businesses, some of which have standards of safety and health which fall well below what is acceptable, has added to the Inspectorate's problems of resource deployment. The recession has led many employers to economise on safety.

A less circumspect, because anonymous,

'Only women get it'

IN A PLEASANT village in Kent, Mrs Valerie Munday still mourns the industrial injury which stopped her working at the age of 49 and still, four years later, means she must rely on her daughter and friends to get her washing and ironing done. Some of the simplest tasks are beyond her. 'I can't scrape new potatoes', she says. Her husband Bill has to write her letters.

For 11 years she worked for a subsidiary of London International (then the London Rubber Company) called Haffenden-Richborough which made rubber plugs and hot water bottles. She fitted the brass parts of the plug together, priding herself on being the fastest worker on the line. Although the line was automated, if the brass was 'bad', the small screw had to be fixed by hand: 360 per shift, up to 11 shifts per working day.

In March 1981, after a set of 'bad brass', Mrs Munday's arm, wrist and hand swelled enormously. At first, as the swelling went down at the weekend, she contented herself with going to First Aid. In the end, her doctor recognised the now permanent and painful swelling as tenosynovitis. From November 1982 there were more and more weeks when she was unable to work. The firm said there were no suitable, lighter jobs. In November 1983 she was sacked.

Mrs Munday is in a way one of the lucky ones. Her husband is the GMB union convenor, and she went to her union, fought for compensation, and accepted an out-of-court settlement of £13,000. The Mundays also wanted to bring a claim for unfair dismissal, but the union advised against. It was the sacking as much as the injury to her arm which really upset the soft-spoken Mrs Munday. 'At times I feel very hurt. I like working. You feel as though you've been thrown on the scrap heap as no good. Sometimes I feel so down in the dumps I feel like crying all day.'

Several other women doing the same work at Haffenden's also received compensation. Tenosynovitis is not a dramatic injury, like a pit accident or chemical explosion. It is the fate of thousands of women whose fast, monotonous work on the everyday items on which we all rely permanently damages their muscles. Ironically, says regional GMB officer Campbell Kennedy, many people refuse to recognise it as an industrial injury 'because only women get it'. ●

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member of the HSE puts it like this: 'Since 1979 there has been a broad philosophy of deregulation in this country. Everyone's pissed off and there's very low morale. There's a lot fewer inspectors and a lot fewer back up staff, he added, unnecessarily: 'I'm profoundly pessimistic.'

'Lifting the burdens'

Health and safety wasn't picked out by the government as an area for making cuts. It simply wasn't exempt. The factory inspectorate — the people who go round firms advising and inspecting — has fallen from 951 in 1979 to 831 now. Yet its area of responsibility has been increased to take in, for instance, fairgrounds and gas hazards.

Mr Tye, director of the Safety Council, a body set up and funded by business, says the factory inspectorate is now 'dangerously understaffed'. With his background in the RAF and business, he is no revolutionary. But he says, hotly, that five or six years ago it was *obvious* that the accident rate would go up if the number of inspectors went down. He had seen it happen in the US when Reagan began his campaign to get the law off industry's back; it began to happen here 'when the Thatcher government got on its hind legs'.

Mr Tye sounds an angry man, fed up with pointing out the obvious in an area where political prejudice simply should not be allowed to put people's lives at risk. One of the signs that the government was motivated by political prejudice was the research carried out for the two White Papers, *Lifting the Burden* and *Building Business not Barriers*. The questionnaire sent out to firms diligently asked small business owners to say if they found health and safety regulations an inhibiting and costly burden. No, was the reply.

But the fact that such laws should be classified by the Department of Employment as a burden rather than an essential of good management sent shivers of alarm through the inspectorate. The government has tried to justify this with the hope that self-regulation is best. It tried an experiment at the building firm Costain, a six-month trial from September 1984 of no inspections on any of its sites, with Costain on its honour (and its insurance company on its tail) to enforce good safety procedure. The experiment was not extended when one of its employees was killed.

No one expects a government as sturdy as Mrs Thatcher's to be put off by such a hiccough. The fear remains that under the twin pressures of deregulation and privatisation, the government will look to increased insurance cover against accidents and compensation claims to take care of workers' health and safety. This solution is unlikely to convince, say, the survivors of the well-insured *Herald of Free Enterprise*.

'The market' does not necessarily push dangerously incompetent firms out of business if other conditions encourage them to survive. The distorted housing boom keeps a myriad dangerous cowboy building firms in business. Firms trying to get rid of chemical waste cheaply may well rely on no-questions-asked operators, with consequent hazards for the public. And thousands more incompetents keep going in agriculture, still one of the most dangerous industries, through state subsidy. As one agricultural inspector commented sourly, if there was a free market in agriculture, most farmers wouldn't survive 'five bloody minutes'.

Unemployment as incentive

But it is the springing up of small businesses which has created the most hazards. Youngsters often accept hazardous work in ignorant gratitude for getting a start on the work ladder. What else would have induced the young man found by a Cumbrian fire inspector to work drilling holes in a room 9 feet by 5, breathing through a rubber tube with one end hanging out of the window because of the terrible fumes given off by the diesel tank he was sharing the room with? Or another young man who was pulled, unconscious from the fumes, out of a dry cleaning tank; every day he wriggled through its 15″ by 11″ opening (this page is $11\frac{3}{4}$″ by 9″) to clean it. If another very small man had not been found to pull him out, he could well have died.

As serious as the rapid rise and often fall of small businesses run by people who know little of management or safety is the decline of trade unionism. The premise of the Health and Safety regulations, which produced such a satisfying fall in the accident rate from 1974, was an active system of workplace safety representatives. Where there is no union, and there hardly ever is in small firms, there is no representative; even where there is, the prevailing atmosphere now makes it harder for trade union reps to make trouble by pointing out the hazards of a work process.

Fear of the employer is particularly strong in small firms and sweatshops, and in immigrant communities where the immediate employer may well be a relative or elder of that community, says Kathy Tait of Birmingham's Health and Safety Advice Centre. The centre knows conditions in many of the West Midlands small firms are appalling, with high rates of dermatitis and dust and noise damage; but getting any worker to make a formal complaint is almost impossible.

Identifying the worst employers is one of the hardest tasks; there is no liaison between the wages inspectorate and the fire services says Neil Kearney of the clothing workers' union — fire being the greatest hazard in the small, overcrowded sweatshops. Firms spring up and disappear overnight, work is endlessly subcontracted through an invisible chain of small shops allowing the big firms like Harrods and C&A to say 'hand on heart' that they only order from reputable suppliers. It is such small, hazardous sweatshops which have undoubtedly made clothes and furniture you possess, regardless of the label. They are insulated from the only pressures which could enforce acceptable working conditions: trade unions and state law enforcement.

One simple equation emerges from this: recession, plus 'lifting burdens' from small businesses, plus weak trade unionism, plus cuts in the civil service equals a serious and dangerous decline in Britain's working conditions. It is one of the few quite clear-cut consequences of this government's policies. How far will Mr Cope accept his responsibility for this in his current negotiations with the Health and Safety Commission and the Treasury? □

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EURORIGHT

French get tanned to a purer shade of white

DENIS MACSHANE *reports on the limits to the appeal of Jean Marie Le Pen's National Front*

La Baule, Brittany

BRITANNY is still the favoured spot for the millions of tourists who cross the Channel each year and among its many fine resorts none is finer than the six-mile-long golden sand bay of La Baule, where *le tout Paris* decamps in the summer, leaving the sweltering south of France to the antics of Monaco's royal family, English politicians and the pastis-swilling municipal *mafiosi* so beloved by Graham Greene.

But this summer the calm clunk of metal ball on metal ball, the sound *pétanque* resounding in each seaside resort, has been spoilt by the launch of the French presidential campaign by Europe's most successful politician of the extreme right, Jean Marie Le Pen. Day after day he has led his caravan around the coastline of France, organising giant meetings to spell out his vision of a white France, in a white Europe committed to a world of anti-communist crusade.

Le Pen's National Front party got 10 per cent of the vote in 1986, which under France's proportional representation system introduced by the Socialist government gave him a solid block of 30 deputies in the National Assembly. Now he has broken the French rule of no politics in the summer break and, with his tour of the beaches, launched himself as a candidate for the presidential election in spring next year.

Given massive publicity by the Hersant press and the newly-privatised French television — there is none of the agonising among French journalists that characterised British media treatment of the British National Front a decade ago — Le Pen is making a mark as an extreme right-wing politician that is without parallel in Europe since the 1930s.

His meetings are crammed, 1,500 people paying £3 each to sit in a tent in La Baule, with little effective counter demonstration. Outside, the political knick-knacks are sold: posters harking back to the defeats of French arms in Vietnam, Suez and Algeria in the 1950s with a venomous, semitic depiction of Pierre Mendes-France, the Jewish prime minister who negotiated peace in Indo-China in 1954.

Le Pen clambers onto the stage to the slave chorus from Verdi's *Nabucco* (does his musical director know it is a lament by Jews?) and holds both hands up, waving cheerily at the crowd like a super salesman at a marketing convention. Off comes a white windcheater and out comes a big handkerchief to wipe a continually perspiring brow. The speech is full of ums and ers, disjointed, skipping from theme to theme, without climax or built-in punch lines to tickle and thrill the crowd.

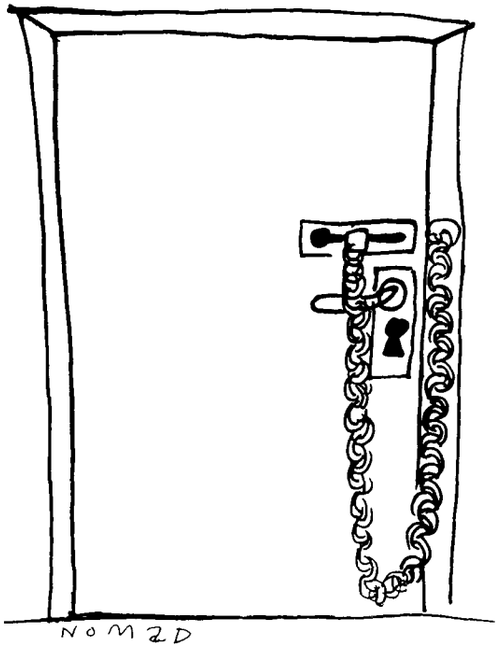
No cheers for gay-bashing

He uses not so much jokes as unpleasant insults with clear anti-semitic undertones as when he attacks Laurent Fabius, the former Socialist prime minister. As with German right-wingers he is obsessed with sodomy and Aids and wants all victims of Aids — *SIDA* in its French acronym — locked away in what he calls '*sidatoriums*'. The skinheads who make up the young part of his audience look uneasily at each other; the older people are embarrassed. Of all the European countries, France has been the most coy in its Aids campaign, while English-style politicised gay-bashing is an unknown phenomenon.

Nor do his sorties into foreign policy work up the crowd. The Gulf crisis he insists is all the fault of the Soviet Union. France is weak and scorned everywhere. According to Le Pen, the French hostages in the Lebanon (among them a television journalist about whom there is the kind of daily publicity that Jimmy Carter faced over the Tehran embassy hostages), should be sacrificed.

> Experience shows that you have to strike first, and threaten later. France lost millions in the First World War, hundreds of thousands in World War II, many more in the 1950s. The destiny of a country can never be weighed against a few human lives. I feel for the families of the hostages like any Frenchman, but eight or 50 or even 150 people cannot count when it is a matter of France being pushed around by a bunch of Arabs.

Such stern calls to martyrdom *pour la France* also leave the crowd perplexed rather than enthused, as do his calls for a free-market economy and an end to bureaucratic interference in the lives of businesspeople. In Le Pen's vision, France's civil servants are apparently the creation of Maurice Thorez, the legendary leader of the French Communist Party who was briefly in government after the war.



And there perhaps lie the roots of Le Pen's major problem. For an extreme right or neo-fascist party to succeed it has to be able to point to a Communist threat, the Bolshevik climbing out of the East with the bloody dagger in his teeth. And however one counts the figures, the French Communist Party is no longer the force it once was. Whether it was ever a threat to anything is another question.

Low moan from the crowd

As a speaker who has been carrying the message of the hard right since his election as a Poujadiste deputy in 1956, Le Pen has some sensitivity to the crowd's feeling. Whenever his rambles about the economy, civil servants, Communism, or the Lebanon get boring, he quickly brings up *the* subject — Arab immigrants in France. And here, in front of this all-white audience at a seaside town with few immigrants, he is at last on home ground. The very mention of the word 'immigrant' brings a kind of low moan from the crowd, arching themselves for more. Le Pen gives it to them, a litany of complaints about 'foreigners' who are given jobs, flats, social security, places on training schemes ahead of French people. 'I am not anti-Arab,' he bellows. 'I want the Arabs to feel at home . . . in their own countries.

'Why is it a crime to discuss Muslim immigrants? Why are more mosques being built than churches? Why is it impossible for a childless French couple to adopt French children and why are they encouraged to adopt foreign children from far-off lands?' And so on and so on. This is what the crowd have come for and they revel in it. The next day they will sit happily on the beach alongside many a foreigner of many a hue but tonight they can be French.

The rest of the French right has no intention of being outflanked by Le Pen. While some French ministers publicly reject Le Pen's policies, others like the interior minister, Charles Pasqua, bring in new laws to stop even casual tourism by Arabs and Africans and give the police new powers to harass immigrants. In municipalities and regions where the National Front holds the balance of power, Prime Minister Jacques Chirac's RPR party has entered into local coalitions.

So in that sense Le Pen has made his mark, but it is as far as he can go. Even if he gets a decent score in the first round of the presidential election next May, he stops there. In addition, Chirac has abolished the proportional representation system, so the National Front deputies should dwindle away in due course. At the end of Le Pen's two-hour speech in La Baule people were anxious to leave. He finished flatly on an appeal for funds. A platform attempt to get everyone to sing the *Marseillaise* had the same impact — at nearly midnight — as playing the national anthem used to have in British cinemas.

If this was a new cresting wave of Euro-fascism then its potential seems pretty limited. In French history, Le Pen will rate a paragraph perhaps. But as with non-white faces elsewhere in Europe that paragraph will hide a great deal of fear and anxiety for millions of people in France and represent a significant and enduring shift to the right in French politics. Like Asians and West Indians in Britain, or Turks in West Germany, to be Arab or African in France will be a mark of second-class citizenship.

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Feeding the Iranian need for martyrdom

We publish here the first full eye-witness account in the British press of the incident in the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia on Friday 31 July, when more than 400 Iranians died. **AHMAD KATTABI,** *a journalist living in Britain, is a Muslim who was there for Hajj, the pilgrimage which every Muslim is required to make once in a lifetime*

AP

'Within two hours the debris and the bodies of the dead and dying were removed' (Iranian picture)

HOLY MECCA at 4.30 in the afternoon, the depth of summer and the height of the holy season in this the holiest of Muslim sites, and the proverbial immovable object was about to meet its equal: the irresistible force. Saudi Arabia, the most heavily regulated and tightly sealed country in the Middle East was about to endure the onslaught of the full might of Khomeini's ultra-revolutionary faithful.

The countdown for confrontation had started several hours earlier. Truckloads upon truckloads of police poured into the streets and lined the two-and-a-half kilometres that separated the Iranian headquarters from the Grand Mosque (the *Haram*, or Sanctuary). But there was no question of who was in control in that section of Mecca that afternoon. For at least two kilometres down the road to the *Haram* there was only one law, and it was Khomeini's. Facing the row of policemen on the other side of the road, three rows of badged Iranian volunteers kept order — their own. They divided the road into two parts, one for women only, marked by a line of badged women volunteers. Three times I was shifted from my place by Iranian volunteers who perhaps confused me with the tens of plainclothes Saudi security men with whom the sidelines teemed. The presence of the Saudis was not always that discreet. In a building facing the Iranian mission at least five video cameras, one operated by a uniformed security officer, were meticulously recording the scene. There was also a photographer who was the source of most pictures that later appeared in the Saudi press.

But the Saudis could do little other than watch. The show was entirely an Iranian affair. The Iranians hoisted banners and pictures of Khomeini and his designated successor, Montazeri. Some even scaled a 60-foot lamp post to plaster pictures on top. The rooftop of a neighbouring telephone building was also taken over, and thousands of posters condemning the US, Israel and Russia were plastered on everything on the route. Logistics were no problem for the highly organised Iranians. The two kilometres of the planned route of their demonstration were laid down with loud-speakers, complete with generators, and the most precious commodity in the Meccan summer, ice-cold water, was in abundant supply for participants and spectators alike.

This whole affair might appear to have been revolutionary defiance, which is in part true.But more of the truth is that the demonstration was part of complex rituals of negotiations and mutual concessions between the Saudis and the Iranians since the Iranians started it as an annual event three years ago. There were mutually agreed premises about the Hajj being a pan-Islamic occasion that should be used to emphasise Muslim solidarity and send political messages about issues of common concern to Muslims. But no agreement was forthcoming on whose politics were to prevail. And no divergence greater than that between Saudi and Iranian politics is imaginable. The Saudis prefer the tradition that has continued for centuries of pilgrimage as a tourist attraction where millions rubbed shoulders but rarely met, and where the encounter actually reinforced rather superseded national divisions and stereotyping. The Iranian alternative of turning these millions into one highly politicised mass was horrifying to the Saudis. The more so since a sizeable portion of the pilgrims are either Saudis or foreigners working in the kingdom.

God's hidden soldiers

Every year the Saudis tell the Iranians to desist. This year, however, 'they were more insistent than usual', according to Ahmad Azizi, who chairs the foreign relations committee in the Iranian parliament. It is not known why the Saudis were so particular about this demonstration when they had allowed another smaller one in Medina to pass without incident. Part of the answer lies in a special message sent by Khomeini for distribution among pilgrims. On Thursday night, on the eve of the Mecca demonstraton, police officers raided the Iranian headquarters in search of the document and arrested about a dozen youth who resisted them. Tens of thousand of Iranians flocked to the square in front of their mission and started to chant slogans, with their numbers growing all the time. By two in the morning the Saudis backed down and freed the detainees. But tension kept growing.

The document in question was perhaps the most powerful statement of Khomeinism yet. It ends on a note that offers a glimpse of the human face of the man who has become a terror to many, a tone that even appears to be slightly lost:

> My God, if no one else knew You sure do know that . . . the sons of this land get martyred beside their fathers and mothers for the glory of Your religion, and fly with smiling lips and hearts full of longing and hope to the domains of your limitless mercy . . . [So] fill the hearts of our people with hope in your succour, and decree victory to our soldiers on the front with your divine succour and hidden soldiers. And give us the blessing of satisfaction in victory and

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in defeat . . . and allow this Islamic Revolution of ours to last until the arrival of the General Reformer.

This brief extract gives an insight into the essence of Khomeinism and shows why Khomeini is 'unreachable'. He lives in a world totally impervious to most mundane considerations, a world where martyrdom is the ultimate glory and where the Messiah and God's hidden soldiers are a directly felt reality.

But it is unlikely that the Saudis were worried by Khomeini's other worldly concerns. What bothered them in the 50-page document must have been the powerful appeal Khomeini made to Muslims for solidarity with Iran, his call for 'cells of Hezbollah' to be formed everywhere in the Muslim world to strike at the US and its allies.

Before that, visits by the Saudi Hajj Minister Abdelwahab Abdelwasi to Tehran and to Khomeini's representative in Mecca tried to reach agreement on the plans for the Hajj demonstration. But the Iranians would not budge on any of the major issues. They did not agree to have a token demonstration of a few thousand. They also would not accept the restriction of the demonstration to Iranians only, and in fact countered by inviting the Saudi minister who made the suggestion to come and participate himself. Two concessions were made by the Iranians, however. First, no slogans against Saudi Arabia or any other Muslim country, including Iraq, were to be allowed. Second, the demonstration was to disperse at the main building of the Posts, Telephones and Telegraph Ministry, about 500 metres from the *Haram* (as it did last year).

So after being treated to various speeches, including readings of Khomeini's now-famous message to pilgrims, marching orders were given to the crowd. It was about 6pm. The marchers were supposed to join worshippers at the *Haram* for the sunset prayer, an hour later. As I climbed on top of a six-floor building nearby, I could see the thousands of banner-wielding demonstrators filling the space as far as the eye could see. They were mostly from among the 150,000 Iranian pilgrims. And this is one aspect at least in which the Saudis succeeded. A conference held by the Iranians in the run-up to their rally had a wide but far from impressive list of participants, which read like a *Who's Who* of Western demonology, mostly known committed Iranian supporters. They included such figures as the alleged Hezbollah patron Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah (who characteristically told the audience that 'when the mountain is closing in on you you do not look up books on international law to see how to deal with it') and the feared leader of Islamic Amal in Ba'albak, Abbas Musawi.

Sparks and screams

Knowing that the most interesting part of the demonstration was likely to be the encounter between the Saudis and the Iranians, I slipped down and made my way through the slogan-chanting multitude towards the front. As I got about 300 metres from the appointed termination point something unusual appeared to be happening. The usual slogan chanting was interrupted by a burst of the Muslim war cry *Allaho Akbar!* ('God is Great'). Then the crowd started pushing back at us. I had to fortify myself behind a concrete lamp-post to avoid being swept by the tide of retreating demonstrators, many of whom were covered in blood from apparent head injuries.

For a few minutes complete confusion reigned. The organisers of the march appeared totally ignorant of what was taking place in front. For several minutes after that the loudspeakers were gleefully relaying the news of the crash of an American helicopter in the Gulf. The law that reigned at the time was that of individual survival.

The source of the attack that created the chaos soon became identifiable. Men in Saudi civil dress on top of a pedestrian bridge about 20 metres in front of me were hurling stones and other missiles at the demonstrators. The same was being done by men standing on the elevated left side of the road, and in a multi-storey car park further in front. At that time even my relatively protected position became untenable as the stampede threatened to engulf us all. I made a fast getaway to the right side of the road where I stood with my back to a small mosque labelled 'Mosque No 42'. There I saw young Iranians break the posts of their banners into sticks of convenient length and charge forward. The whole area became a battlefield. Increasing numbers of injured passed us by, some being helped along. They included two Saudi police officers who had head injuries and came running past until they disappeared in the alleyways at the back.

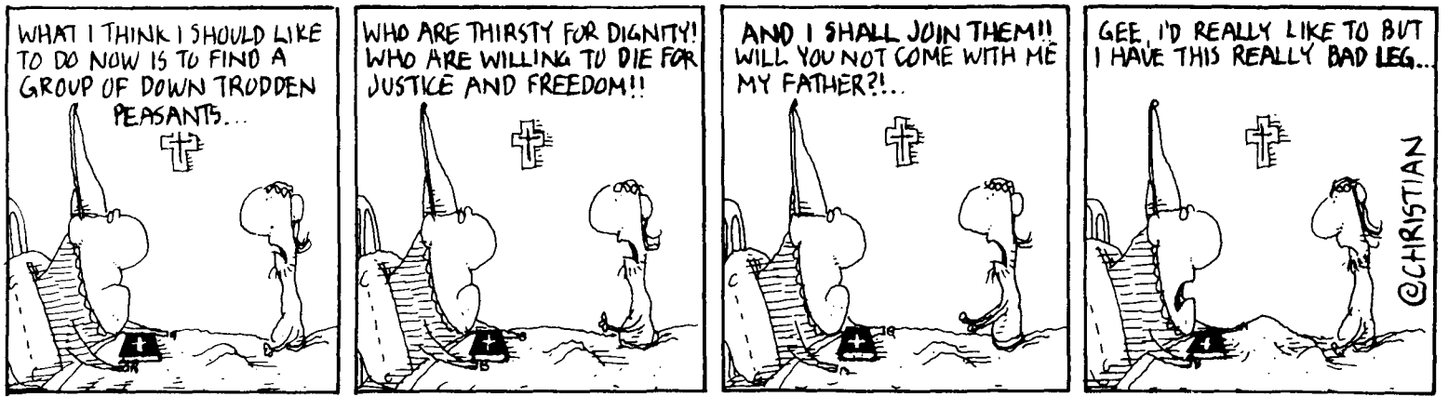
Suddenly there were sounds of firing from the front and I saw columns of black smoke rise from there. That is when I decided it was too perilous to stay where I was. So I made my way back as fast as I could. But then it became clear that our retreat was not safer than the battlefield in front. The Saudi police were attacking at several points along the main road. The only retreat open to us was up a hill to the west of the city. But as soon as we climbed the elevated section of the road, hundreds of police and plainclothes security officers came charging at the crowd from the east. It was difficult for anyone who witnessed that scene ever to think of any man in Saudi dress as anything but a security agent. Suddenly the whole of Mecca seemed to be teeming with them. The atmosphere reeked of tear gas but the sounds of firing became further apart. I managed to slip in a side road where several bystanders stood watching. A crowd of policemen streamed past chasing Iranians with electric batons, their sticks sending sparks in the air to mix with the screams of the unfortunate victims.

As the Iranians and their chasers went by I was able to slip back to town, but the road to my residence was still impassable, blocked by thousands of Iranians who were sitting down. Police were moving in on them from two directions with water cannon, tear gas and batons. It was not the best place to head so I went in the opposite direction, to the *Haram*. I went past hundreds of security men to where the demonstration ended in chaos. As I approached a crowd of people on the road, and just as I was passing a place called the 'Holy Mecca Cafeteria', I nearly stumbled over a woman lying on the pavement. At that same moment someone uncovered her face. She was a middle-aged Iranian woman. Her mouth was slightly open, her hair which she laboured all her life to cover from strangers was scattered all over the place, her face was very pale. Then I looked to the left and saw that the whole road was covered in bodies and blood. Never before in my life have I seen so many bodies. My sense of adventure which was keeping me amused and light-hearted all through this episode dulled into a feeling of intense fear. I hastened on my way to the mosque, past security men who were molesting an elderly Iranian, who, far from being a revolutionary, was screaming for mercy, and past another cordon of riot police. Inside the mosque, the hundreds of thousands of worshippers there seemed totally unaware of the drama taking place a few hundred steps away.

That night Mecca was a very lonely place for the Iranians. They got little solidarity from Meccans or any other pilgrims. In some places, even children turned on fleeing Iranians who tried to take refuge in side streets, stoning and beating them. Bitter and subdued, the Iranians turned back to their inexhaustible sense of martyrdom, seeing in this very tragedy their gratification, in the example of the Prophet who had been hounded by Meccans before.

All around, Mecca was getting back to 'normal'. Within two hours the bodies of the dead and dying near the cafeteria and the scores of wailing Iranian women around them were removed. The street was even washed clean with water. The debris elsewhere was also being swiftly removed.

Later that night a bit of that debris came into my possession, an empty bullet case inscribed with the date AH 1399 (1979), and K 7.62, in Arabic, and therefore almost certainly Saudi. □


WHAT I THINK I SHOULD LIKE TO DO NOW IS TO FIND A GROUP OF DOWN TRODDEN PEASANTS...
WHO ARE THIRSTY FOR DIGNITY! WHO ARE WILLING TO DIE FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM!!
AND I SHALL JOIN THEM!! WILL YOU NOT COME WITH ME MY FATHER?!..
GEE, I'D REALLY LIKE TO BUT I HAVE THIS REALLY BAD LEG...
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ARTS

CINEMA

Lights of the world

Judith Williamson

Comrades (PG)
Curzon West End
Good Morning Babylon (15)
Lumiere
Power (15)
Cannon Tottenham Court Road

The New World of cinema: Nicola (Vincent Spano) and Andrea (Joaquim de Almeida) watch America on the porthole-screen in *Good Morning Babylon*

SO OFTEN FILMS about politics seem lacking in a passion for the medium they're made in; or, conversely, a passion for cinema becomes divorced from any sense of how it might function politically. Here at last are two films which — different as they are in both style and content — deal with the politics *of* cinema: with both its materiality and its purpose in the real world that film is at once in and about.

For film consists of light, thrown on to the screen; and just as this literal illumination must inevitably have a direction, so must the politics of its content. We are used to the apparently sourceless light of bourgeois cinema, offering us a vision of the world as if it were the only one possible; yet these films each in their way remind us that that light can be thrown differently, and can illuminate people and events that have been hidden in the shadows of conventional history.

Bill Douglas' **Comrades**, subtitled 'A Lanternist's Account of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and What Became of Them', has the clear purpose of commemoration: and at a time when trade union politics are unfashionable not only on the right but on much of the left, the Tolpuddle labourers' fight to unionise in the face of wage cuts is as relevant as ever. Their story has to be told and remembered; *Comrades* not only tells it, but engages with the problems of preserving and passing on working-class stories in a culture which works to suppress them.

For there *are* problems with telling 'history from below' and one which besets *Comrades* very seriously is that of style: the tale of hardship, struggle, arrest and deportation is told in the conventional realist form that we have become accustomed to in historical dramas. Maybe working people really didn't wear bright colours; nevertheless the grim greys and greens that characterise the lives of the worthy poor in movies seem so familiar that some of their impact in presenting the experience of rainy, muddy, rural poverty is blunted. Part of this style is the way the goodies all look ruggedly honest, the baddies vicious and leering; but even worse, the good men are all good and masculine, the good women all good and womanly, while the baddies contain a disproportionate number of campy, effeminate figures, from the squire's ring-laden agent to the creepy Australian landlord with his pet boy. Not only is this whole mode of representation crude, its sense of sexual politics (the very worst character has sex with his *dog*) verges on the tabloid.

Yet *Comrades* differs from conventional dramas in two ways. First, it is a narrative without a single hero and instead of being drawn into the structures of imaginary identification invited by most mainstream films, we follow the characters as onlookers. Second, this position is one we are reminded of throughout the film. A harvesting sequence begins with close-ups of the heavily exhausting, repetitive labour; shot by shot, the camera pulls out and the light falls, until from a distance we see in a golden evening glow what looks like a peaceful harvest scene, familiar from countless paintings and postcards. At this moment the film cuts to a reverse shot of the squire's family driving by in a carriage, so that this image becomes *what they see*; picturesqueness is shown to be a middle-class view of labour.

The rich also have the power to preserve their image; the Australian governor has his arrogance crisply outlined for posterity by a silhouette cutter. The poor must struggle to pass on their messages; throwing poems on scrumpled paper through prison bars. And the filmmaker must take sides: *Comrades* casts the lanternist (a succession of different characters played by the same actor) as witness, right from the opening scene where he watches the brutal suppression of a rebellion.

We next see him by night at the door of the manor; and as the squire's maid walks the length of the house, its wealthy inhabitants loom large in the giant looping shadows thrown by her candle, reminding us at once of the fluidity of light and its capacity for changing the shapes of our perceptions. Film is illusion, Douglas insists, yet it must be used; and *Comrades* ends with the solidarity committee hosting a lantern show of the

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Every picture tells our story: Alex Norton as the lanternist in *Comrades*

Tolpuddle story where the chairman says to the presenter, 'Go then, and make a union of lanternists.'

The Taviani brothers' **Good Morning Babylon** virtually picks up this thread a century later, with the lives of those who worked behind the scenes in the early cinema industry. With its elegant aesthetic utterly different in style from *Comrades*, their concerns nevertheless overlap. While Douglas takes cinema's actual predecessor, the magic lantern show, as his analogy with film, the Tavianis take the Church of Miracles — a metaphor for cinema if ever there was one — both a physical structure and an institution of belief. 'The work of hands and of fantasy', as the heroes' father puts it, this building is his last commission as a professional restorer, for he goes bankrupt and his youngest sons Nicola and Andrea go to the States to seek their fortunes. From restoring bas-relief elephants on the Romanesque church, they move to designing giant elephants for the Babylonian scenes in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*.

Like *Comrades*, *Babylon* is about cinema, point of view, light; but here the joy of looking is wound into the form of the film itself, which is shot squarely and simply with each image so beautifully and yet almost detachedly composed that watching it is like being given a series of presents — it is a labour of love, like the box of verbal images the brothers give their girlfriends. We are first shown film as shafts of light in a sideways shot of the projector when Griffith watches *Cabiria* in the Italian pavilion at the 1915 Expo; the theme of its connection with architecture is echoed in the next sequence as searchlights play around the building itself. The shifting relation of the world to its light explains the film's title: 'Good morning' is the father's message to his sons each evening from Italy where his dusk is their dawn. And light creates both natural and artificial environments; dusk for the birds the brothers tend is when they put a blanket on their cages. Light makes filming possible, and filming makes preservation possible. The brothers' magnificent trial elephant, built from old cinema posters in the woods, is burned down by a jealous production manager; but it is already on film and when Griffith sees it he employs the brothers as art directors.

The scene in which the elephant is filmed is the political heart of the movie. The brothers and their friends — technicians and extras, Hollywood's 'working class' — stay up all night by candlelight painting it white so they can shoot it in the morning, and one of the women makes a key speech: 'Let's never forget the way we are now, helping each other — that's why this Hollywood of ours is so wonderful.' Collective enterprise is the basis of filmmaking — and of socialist politics.

Its antithesis is war; the film ends in World War One when the dying brothers meet — with perfect structural logic — in front of the Church of Miracles and, finding a camera, film each other 'so our sons will always know what we look like.' Yet even in this final celebration of film's capacity to preserve and pass on, the disjunction between an image and the experience it represents is brought out subtly and movingly when one brother tells the other to smile for the camera and he replies, touchingly, 'I thought I was smiling'. The improbability of this whole scene is characteristic of the way Babylon reminds us that film is an aesthetic and political structure, not a transparent window: its every image has both grace and purpose.

I have no space to discuss Sidney Lumet's **Power**, also opening this week; but it too is about the politics of the image and the image of politics. Well made as it is, this film contrasts with *Comrades* and *Babylon* in its ultimately liberal belief in a neutral image, that needs no wielding and can let real honesty show through. But every image is a projection: film can never be transparent. What it can be used for is to show our world in a radically different light.

Apologies to everyone for having used a photograph of Israel and Doris Rubenstein — rather than of Betty and David Finn, as intended and, indeed, as stated in the caption — to illustrate Liz Heron's review of the photographer Boris last week.

COMRADES
PG
'COMRADES' A FILM BY BILL DOUGLAS WITH ROBIN SOANS · WILLIAM GAMINARA · STEPHEN BATEMAN · PHILIP DAVIS · JEREMY FLYNN · KEITH ALLEN
& ALEX NORTON AS THE LANTERNIST WITH SPECIAL GUEST STARS IN A PARABOLICAL ORDER MICHAEL CLARK AS THE SAILOR ARTHUR DIGNAM AS THE PRIEST JAMES FOX AS MORTON JOHN HARGREAVES AS THE SAILOR MICHAEL HORDERN AS THE PRIEST
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EDINBURGH

Native to the heart

Paul Allen

SINCE ALMOST EVERYBODY dies at the end of **Hamlet** it is easy to forget that the play is as much about broken hearts as broken heads.

The publicity for the Moscow-based Studio Theatre of the South West makes the usual noises about its being a political play: a confrontation between Claudius, pragmatically doing his best for the state of Denmark, however unpleasant, and a Hamlet who is not so much doubtful about what to do as constrained by the problems of how to do it. These elements are there, sure enough, though there is a flaw to the interpretation — nowhere does the play say that the murder of Hamlet's father by Claudius was other than an act of personal ambition — but the real beauty of *Hamlet* is the way it enmeshes the public and the personal. And what makes this the most exciting production I've seen in Edinburgh this year, and one of the most thrilling Shakespearean productions ever, is the astonishing emotional power of its acting.

Hamlet, Ophelia and Laertes are butterflies broken by hard men driving for power or vengeance, vessels too fragile ever to bear the great purposes they are charged with. Not that there is anything sentimental or wimpish about them: Hamlet is played by an ex-truckdriver (Victor Avilov) with a gaunt crow's face and eyes of an icon; he is capable of wit, tenderness and dazzlingly violent action and the final fight with Laertes is conducted in the half-dark at breathtaking speed, with a swirling crowd trying to get a clear but safe view of the action. Claudius (Valery Belyakovich) is a grinning, urgent, hungry power baron who tells his court that beating the Norwegian invaders and restoring Denmark's glory is going to be sexy.

The production (by Belyakovich, the only trained actor in the company) goes for fairly stark effects. It is played largely in black under white spotlights which means that characters move in and out of shadows like rats in a sewer. Music by Rick Wakeman and others underscores the entire action so that even the court scenes, even old Polonius, twitch to the beat of a drum machine. The ghost is a giant with an amplified voice. 'To be or not to be' is moved towards the end of the play so that Hamlet goes to his duel thinking of death and the final act of the play becomes his Passion. Some of this is over-emphatic but it is fast, direct and cumulatively shattering. It can be caught at the Tron Theatre in Glasgow this Friday and Saturday (28 and 29 August) and it should be seen more widely still.

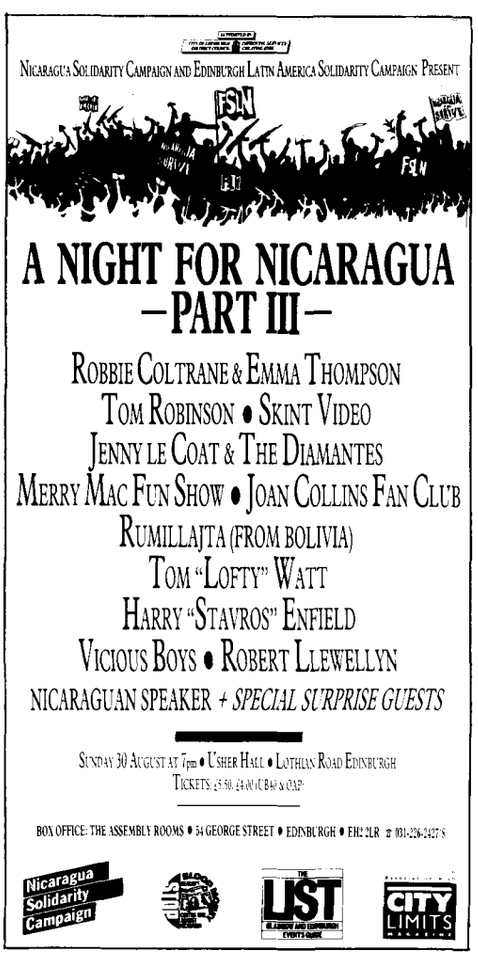
Hamlet runs without interval and without simultaneous translation for nearly three hours and I was completely involved. By contrast, the Berliner Ensemble's **Troilus and Cressida** is thoroughly admirable but deliberately dispassionate and rather cold. The focus of the production is not the young lovers, rather awkwardly played anyway, but Thersites (Ekkehard Schall) and Pandarus (Arno Wyzniewski). The Greek is a snarling cynic, too angry ever to get involved in the action, the Trojan a time-serving bureaucrat too practical ever to detach himself from the grisly work of politics. The play turns into a fascinating parade of moral arguments about the ambiguities of war, honour, love and loyalty but it never brings a lump to the throat. All very Brechtian, I dare say, but what's the good if you don't care?

The Cameri Theatre from Tel Aviv have also shown a play of political and moral argument, with a pacy and occasionally stirring production of **Michael Kohlhaas** by James Saunders. It is set in 16th-century Germany and its hero is a Protestant tradesman who knows his rights and is afraid only of God. When he is cheated by a landowner and his wife dies in consequence, his search for justice turns into a quest for vengeance which seems to burn and slaughter half Germany. He ends up on the block thanks to the intervention of a dislikeable and pedantic Martin Luther. Ilan Ronen's production has marvellous moments, notably the end of Act One when Kohlhaas appears at the head of an army of the dead to the accompaniment of a bass choir. But, after promising much and making abundantly clear the difference between justice and order, it dribbles away in Act Two.

On the Fringe, the Traverse Theatre once again seems to have got almost nothing wrong and John Godber's new play for Hull Truck, **Teechers**, while adding an overt political edge to his established gift for vernacular comedy, is one of the few plays to command the same sort of audiences as the highly commercialised cabaret acts. Apart from his sheer skill in making a cast of three depict the staff and pupils of a large comprehensive, Godber actually likes his characters, enabling him to make them rounded and credible in the shorthand scenes that carry so much plot.

With as total contrast in form as possible, the Shaliko Company from New York use the 18th-century text of Punch and Judy as the springboard for a farcical, *commedia*-style paradigm of violence from child abuse to the Bomb. **Punch!** is not always sure of its tone and the grim humour doesn't always work, but it disturbs almost everyone.

Distinctions in Edinburgh are blurring all the time. You pay £6.50 for any seat for the acappella group Sweet Honey in the Rock on the Fringe, whereas you could get in to see the Berliner Ensemble for £3 in the official Festival. Worries about the way the Fringe has turned commercial and fallen into the hands of PR have lead to the formation of a 'Fringe fringe society' with whom I have some sympathy. On the other hand, the Russian *Hamlet* is Fringe in Moscow and Fringe in Edinburgh and it seems to be all right. □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ART

Another planet

John Spurling

Under the Sign of Saturn
Nigel Greenwood, 4 New Burlington St. London W1 until 12 September
20th Anniversary Exhibition
Lisson Gallery, 67 Lisson St, London NW1, until 19 September

LONDON'S WEST END in August is a slowed-down version of the second circle of the Inferno. Instead of being whirled round ceaselessly in a black wind, like Dante's sexual incontinents, the tourists drift, scatter and coagulate like quantities of loose paper in a light breeze. But if you want to be alone you have only to enter one of the smart contemporary art galleries. The art world has decamped to Edinburgh or the Mediterranean, or perhaps to Ulan Bator.

The artists showing at the Nigel Greenwood and Lisson galleries these dog days belong mostly to the cool, intellectual end of the contemporary spectrum. Their work suggests the labour and aridity of creation, little of its passion or release. In the old division of Chinese art between artists and scholar-artists they would certainly have belonged with the latter, painfully aware at every point that to make art when so much art has already been made demands the temperament and skills of a commentator or critic. The difference from mere critics is less in the approach than in the nature of the final artefact. Critics aim to convert their thoughts and reactions into explanation and elucidation, artist-critics into something *requiring* elucidation — a visual form of mystery or riddle.

Stuart Morgan, the critic who has 'curated' the Greenwood exhibition, has added a further refinement by choosing a title and theme with its own mysterious resonances, so that the nine artists he has assembled **Under the Sign of Saturn** are

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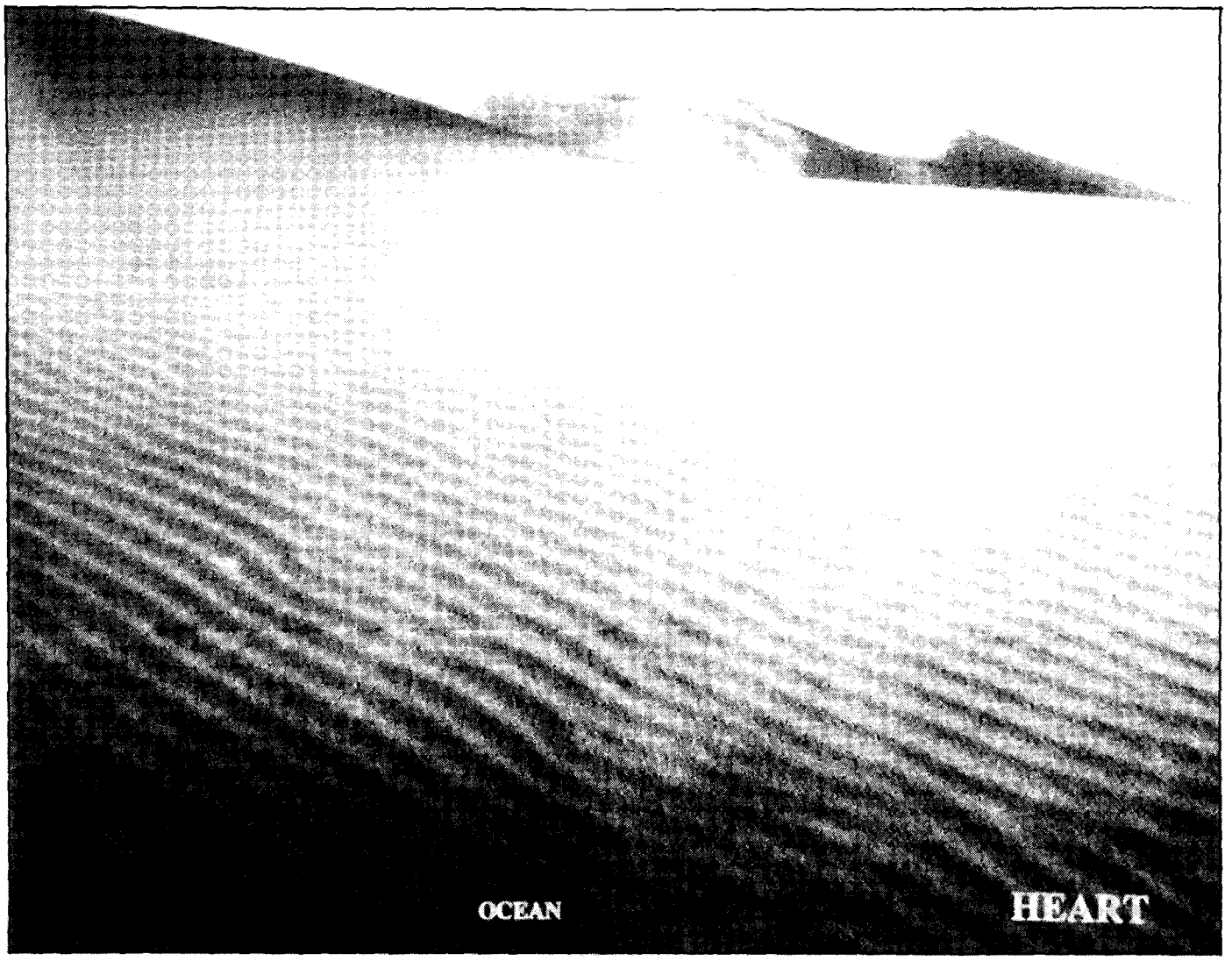

Hannah Collins' 'Fall 1987'. Cool chez Nigel Greenwood

transformed into the elements of his own art-critical creation — or at least curation. Saturn, he reminds us in his introductory essay, is the planet of measurement as well as of artists and depressives, and in the course of 1,200 words he manages to bring in Descartes, Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, Brecht and Dürer's famously riddling print *Melencolia*. Well, now I have managed it too and may add that, according to the *OED*, Saturn is supposed to cause coldness, sluggishness and gloominess and 'in general to have a baleful effect on human affairs'. But towards the end of his essay Morgan suddenly descends from his cold planetary spaces and with some warmth longs for art 'to take a journalistic role — not one of reporting facts but of testifying to how it feels to be alive, here, now . . .'

Quite so. And that of course is the problem, not only with Morgan's ill-attended show, but with much of the work that the art-world would see even if it were the height of the season and they were all back from Edinburgh and Ulan Bator. It's not that these artists are too intellectual or even too cold and sluggish, but that they're too marginal, too timid and too hung up on their special problem: the boundary between art and life.

Steve Willats, for instance — not in Morgan's Saturnian show, but part of the Lisson Gallery's **20th Anniversary Exhibition** — makes a simple arrangement of photographs of an anxious-looking woman, an anonymous modern building, a computer tape, keyboard and monitor, a telephone and calculator, suffuses each in an arbitrary colour, adds a real digital clock and writes round the edge in capitals; 'HOW CAN I ESCAPE THE POWER OF THE OBJECT IN CONTEMPORARY LIVING?' Then at the centre, below the photograph of the woman, he adds this quote: 'You look out on the world outside but somehow you're no longer part of it. I find it threatening, people seem to become totally obseessed, it's a feeling between fear and awe, I just feel apprehension.' Clearly he's trying to do what Morgan is asking for, but equally clearly he's only succeeded in making a statement of the obvious, relying on the authenticity of the quote to redeem the crudity of the arrangement and transmute what is neither art nor life into both. If you remove everything Willats has added and leave only the quote, the statement is just as strong — indeed stronger for not being so heavy-handedly underlined.

Most of the Lisson artists are less bothered about life than Willats. They protect themselves from the world and achieve a certain pallid elegance by setting and solving formal problems of their own, escaping the power of the object by making objects blatantly without power — imitations, spoofs, geometrical space-fillers. Only Anish Kapoor's *Shrine*, a low, mud-coloured wax mound painted deep blue inside, and John Virtue's *Landscape no. 40* suggests artists who think or care about anything but occupying a gallery.

Two more of Virtue's landscapes are in Morgan's show at the Greenwood gallery. Each consists of a grid of small panels, obsessively drawn in pen and ink, of more or less the same bit of country, but from slightly different angles and view-points, so that it's as if that wood or group of houses among small hills had sat down for its portrait photograph and this was the sheet of contacts. But although the grid arrangement and the repetition of motifs is a deliberately self-conscious artistic device, the dark, nightmarish quality of the drawing has the effect of bringing you in closer instead of distancing you. Yet the panels are hard to look at individually and you find yourself thrust away again. These are true mysteries made out of the artist's own equivocation between seeing, feeling and drawing.

So are Flora Natapoff's long, narrow strip-paintings called *Swift Transitions of Towns*. Crowds, faces and buildings, painted in brown, yellow, white, grey, cream and black loom out at you and disappear as you walk along following the strip, in the same ordinary, nightmarish way as Virtue's roads, hills, houses and trees or indeed as the real people filling the streets once you leave the shelter of the gallery.

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TELEVISION

Step by step

Hanif Kureishi

THESE ARE MY FIRST words as a television critic and I've survived my first week of watching TV in any concentrated way. Generally, I take it for granted that doing *anything* is better than watching TV and the only serious psychological effect that TV could have on anyone is to send them into a deep stupor. So, last Monday, I laced up my heavy boots, eager and ready to give a good kicking to anything on the screen that disagreed with me. I was especially ready to put the boot into the myth of British TV being the best in the world. I was looking to do in *that* little darling with a vengeance.

But, to my dismay, and despite the extreme ugliness of the presenters on *TV AM* and a setting which ought to be buried in a hole in the ocean along with nuclear waste, there was something good to watch every single day.

I watched a week of **Screenplay Firsts** (BBC 2), short films made by film students. They were all accomplished — from Noella Smith's WWII story abotu women of 'enemy nationality' detained in a house on the Isle of Man, to *See You At Wembley*, a wonderful, eccentric comedy about the clash between love and football, which squeezed much laughter from even my miserable lips.

And there was Suri Krishnamma's diploma film about a Pakistani nurse and a psychiatric patient, *A View From The Window*, starring my friends Saeed Jaffrey and Rita Wolf, with Saeed in devastating form. There has to be room on TV for more of these short stories on film, both as a form in itself and a way of developing young people's talent.

For some reason it turned out that a number of the programmes I watched this week featured friends of mine. My mate Gordon Warnecke was in **Bureaucracy of Love** (C4), a drama-documentary about two married Asian couples being buggered around by the racist immigration authorities which ensure that, in our Queendom of the Family, black families are separated and broken up. This was a strong, human story, clearly exposing racism and hypocrisy, only slightly marred by the useful statistics of oppression which kept rolling over the screen and intruding into a gripping, necessary narrative.

I was looking forward to **Partition** (C4), in which Saeed once again featured as a lunatic — this time in an asylum in India in 1947. The epic story of partition, the largest exodus in history, in which every family on the sub-continent was said to have lost at least one member, has yet to be told on British TV. After all, it is less glamorous than the tea-sipping, eternal high summer of the Raj; and the costumes are more bloody.

But Ken McMullen's film had my feet itching inside my kicking-boots and the screen almost got a beating as his camera tracked again and again across a wall. Not that it was an uninteresting wall, and not that the pillars in front of it were not exquisitely shot and lit, but it was one of those films in which, when you saw someone at the top of a staircase, you knew that you were going to see them walk down every single stair. Perhaps McMullen kept the camera on inanimate objects like walls, staircases and actors in order to distract us from Tariq Ali's dialogue, in which the actors were trapped like flies in treacle. They had to make speeches at each other which contained lines like 'power seems omnipotent but it never is' and 'we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms'. They sounded as if they were reading from one of Lenin's more obscure pamphlets on the economy.

But I was able to take off my boots altogether when I gave in to the treat of the week, which was of course the 22-year-old **Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton** (BBC1) by Dennis Potter, which I'd never seen before. It's possible to see now that Potter rates with Osborne and Pinter as the best of the British post-war dramatists. His only crime as a writer is to work in a mass medium — television — so that much of his best work has been unavailable for years.

Despite being shot on now-faded video and looking far rougher than McMullen's art stage-set, *Vote, Vote, Vote* ripped along, bursting with wit, passion and intelligence as it explored the conflicts between idealism and power, pragmatism, compromise and betrayal, with characters saying familiar things like, 'I'd rather be in opposition forever, as long as we keep the purity of our ideals.' It could have been yesterday.

There were plenty of other good things — and, don't forget, this is August. There was Hugh Masekala and his band live at S.O.B.'s in New York in **Late Night in Concert** (BBC1): celebratory and joyful. And what about Shirley Clarke's documentary about the great Ornette Coleman — **Sounds of Surprise** (C4) — part of an excellent series of jazz programmes?

And, one dazed afternoon, I flipped over to a documentary called **One Village in China** (BBC2) in which a funeral featured. I was amazed by the richness, colour, extravagance and emotional depth of the ritual. There it was, all this active culture and creative life beaming into the tower blocks and sterile suburbs of our enervated land. It *almost* made me want to do something — live life instead of watching it — but I knew there'd be something good on TV later. And, anyway, after watching so much, I felt somehow debilitated and empty, not full and stimulated as I would if I'd read a book; it was as if my energy had been taken from me.

Hanif Kureishi's new film, Sammy and Rosie Get Laid, *is to be released in January 1988.*

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In the Skin of a Lion
MICHAEL ONDAATJE *Secker* £10.95

MICHAEL ONDAATJE's latest book is his most remarkable thus far. A dreadful upset for those who wish to categorise, his 'novel' ignores accepted boundaries: cinematic, poetic, a seamless mix of archive material and invention, it is in fact a perfect excuse for a knees-up, evidence (and we need it) that the novel novel is alive and well.

In the Skin of a Lion is both a love story and a journey of discovery. Its 'hero', Patrick Lewis, a country boy who comes to Toronto in the early 1920s, is the only native Canadian in the novel and yet the character who feels most alien: 'Always the third person in the picture', the man who 'clung like moss to strangers, to the nooks and fissures of their situations'.

But Ondaatje leaps beyond the contemporary preoccupation with a man 'finding' himself: his central character does not monopolise centre stage. Patrick's story is also the story of Canada — particularly, of the building of Toronto — and is juxtaposed with the stories of his contemporaries: schemers, dreamers, actresses, immigrant workers, Nicholas the dare-devil bridge builder, Caravaggio the thief. The novel turns on how Patrick the outsider finally becomes part of something, a piece of the mural, 'something ungoverned by the family he was born into or the headlines of his day'. There are no obvious crossroads on this journey. Ondaatje takes the reader on a circuitous route towards the moment that he suggests comes to us all: the moment we *do* assume centre stage and take responsibility for the story; the moment we dress, for an instant, in the skin of a lion.

To this end we follow Nicholas, Patrick and Caravaggio, labouring with them on the bridge and in the 'brown slippery darkness' of the tunnel beneath Lake Ontario. In a book studded with treasures, perhaps it is Ondaatje's pictures of workers which linger most of all. The killing floors of the tannery 'where you moved among the bellowing cattle stunning them towards death with sledgehammers'; the sausage and fertiliser makers; the dyers working waist-deep in circular pits, 'embracing the skins of recently slaughtered animals'; the young men, Macedonians, Poles and Lithuanians with only three or four sentences of English, working for a dollar a day.

> They had consumed the most evil smell in history, flesh death, which lies in the vacuum between flesh and skin and even if they never stepped into this pit again a year from now they would burp up that odour. They would die of consumption and at present they did not know it . . . nobody could

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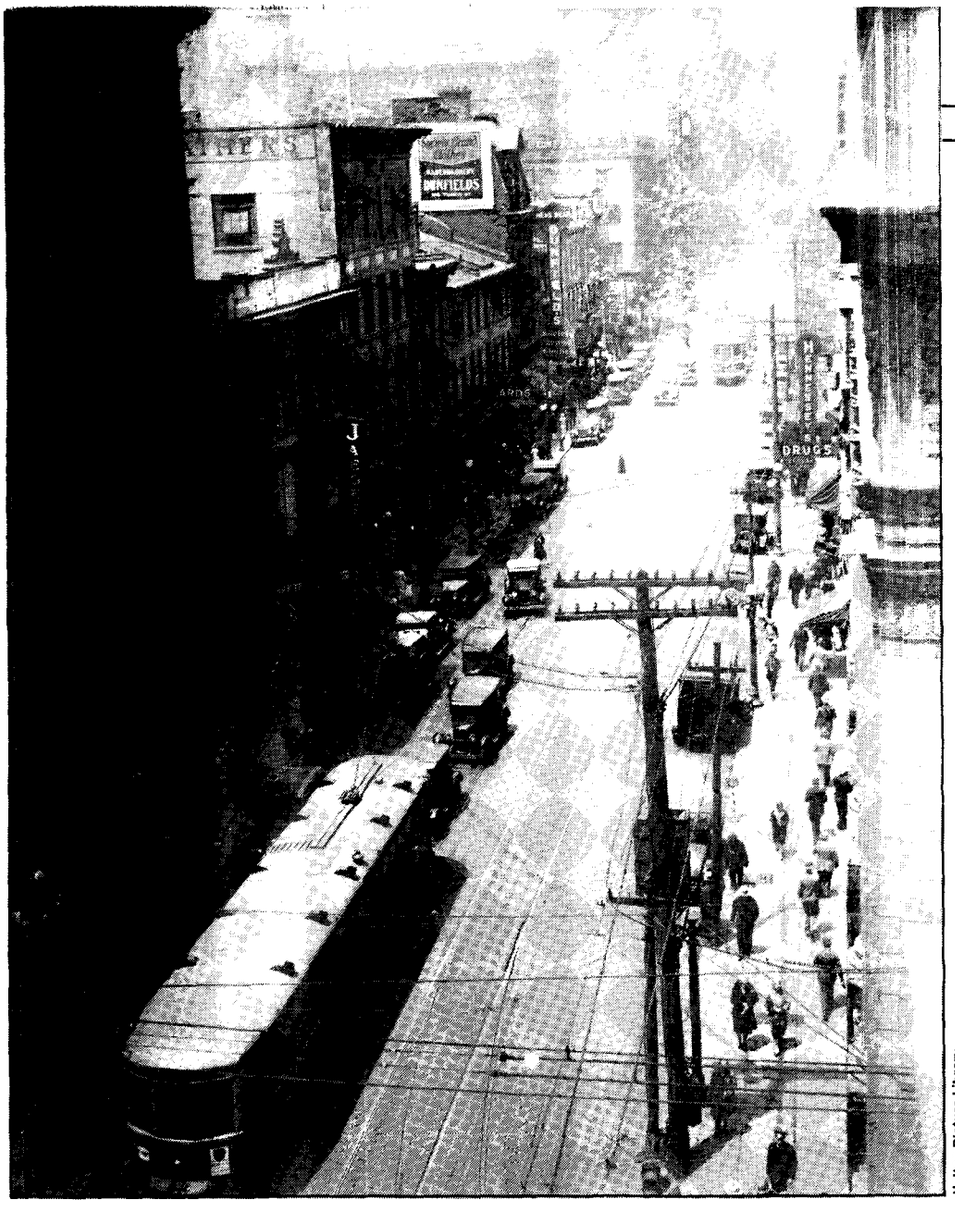

Hulton Picture Library

A million stories . . . street, cars and desire in Toronto 1931

survive in that job more than six months and only the desperate took it . . . what remained in the dyers' skin was the odour that no woman in bed would ever lean towards.

'I'll tell you about the rich,' Patrick's girlfriend says:

> The rich are always laughing. They keep saying the same things on their boats and lawns: "Isn't this grand. We're having a good time!" And whenever the rich get drunk and maudlin about humanity you have to listen for hours. But they keep you in the tunnels and stockyards. They do not toil or spin. Remember that . . .

It is as difficult to select from this book as it is to categorise it: Patrick comforted by a stranger in the fragrant Garden for the Blind? Caravaggio the thief returning home to his wife, 'lifting her onto his shoulders so that her arms ascend into the chandelier'?

Perhaps the novel's only flaw is its statement of intent, something that need not have been said but is, nonetheless, a gift to the reviewer: 'Only the best art can order the chaotic tumble of events. Only the best can realign chaos to suggest the chaos and order it will become. Meander if you want to get to town.'

FICTION

Thin ice

Michelene Wandor

A Friend from England
ANITA BROOKNER *Cape* £9.95

THE IMPLICATIONS of the novel's title become clear only when one has finished the book. Its concluding chapter has the narrator travelling to Venice to try and persuade her 'best' friend to abandon a second marriage and return to comfort her ageing parents: a fitting emotional conflict and climax, in theory; in practice, Anita Brookner has produced yet another impeccable stylistic tapestry, with very dubious emotional rewards and a great deal of evasion.

Rachel is 32 and runs a bookshop with two colleagues to whom she never speaks. She has inherited her father's loyal accountant, Oscar Livingstone, his wife Dorrie and their daughter Heather. Rachel tells the story and is therefore in a prime position to reveal or conceal whatever she wishes. Thus she is, by implication, an 'emancipated' woman with, it is hinted but never said, a great deal of 'experience', sexual and emotional.

Quite what it is that has brought her to the point of living her life 'on the surface', buffered from all emotional entanglement, we never know. But the Livingstone family represents an important real and fantasy outlet for her. After they win a lot of money on the pools, she is assigned by them as chaperone/friend to 27-year-old Heather — although Rachel tells us that she doesn't actually like Heather, and the feeling is reciprocated. With the Livingstones Rachel can relax, feel like a child, without responsibilities. Until, that is, Heather decides to marry.

Suppressed beneath Rachel's impeccable prose tug the inklings of sexual jealousy. But so faint are they that I find it hard to tell whether either Rachel or her creator are aware of them. In any case, of whom is she jealous? Does she secretly fancy Heather? Or is it the bridegroom? We never know, and the sub-text is too closely guarded to reveal.

As with Brookner's other novels, the central ambiguity concerning her work comes through loud and clear: is this yet another novel about English repression, or is it merely a novel in which the author's imagination is itself repressed by a chosen form, exquisite but self-defeating? Rachel confesses to some fears — a fear of water, implying a fear of emotion through tears — and she admits to anger and other powerful emotions, but all are recollected in the tranquility of descriptive passages. That Brookner shies away from dialogue is significant: in dialogue, you have to approach engagement between characters. Neither do we get the real pain of the inner voice, since Rachel never really faces herself.

There is one moment when Rachel begins to approach such a confrontation, when she, the 'free' woman, seems to need Heather to fulfil obligations which she herself hasn't the guts to face. But by now we have reached the end of the book, and the two women have never had the kind of relationship where a confrontation might matter.

The novel's central dilemma is certainly fascinating: how does the 'modern' woman reconcile existential freedom with emotional need (the central concern of Margaret Drabble's work). The loving and meticulous approach to prose is utterly admirable — a latter-day Henry James. But something essential is lacking: engagement, commitment and, finally, passion. In a short story, the dilemma could have been tellingly stated; in a novel, it is so cool as to leave one shivering with, I'm afraid, lack of interest.

FICTION

Pain killer

Sara Maitland

Dreams of Dead Women's Handbags
SHENA MACKAY *Heinemann* £10.95

SHENA MACKAY HAS an uncomfortably accurate and shrewd eye for the details of bourgeois life, and an appropriately shrewd and

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elegant style to tell us what she has seen. This is a combination that suits the satirist well and in *Redhill Rococo*, her last novel, she showed how well she could handle satire: hilarity without loss of compassion is a rare and lovely thing.

But it works less well in this collection of stories — because here Mackay is not, I think, trying to be funny, though too many sentences do stretch longingly towards a snappy, witty conclusion. Real pain and madness lurk within almost all these stories: the pain and madness of loneliness, isolation and failure. And there is something almost plaintive in the tone — as though the stories themselves, or at least the characters in them, know and fear that they may be laughed at and feel they don't deserve it. Are we expected to laugh at poor Miss Agnew, doomed, by the death of her woman lover, to live out her life despised, along with an odd group of other social exiles, on an upper story of a seaside hotel in 'Where the Carpet Ends'? Or at the agony of a writer's loss of faith in her own talent in 'The Thirty First of October'? Or at the fierce intensity and pyromanic despair of poor little Joe, misunderstood child, who finds herself a frail friendship with two artistic homosexuals in 'All the Pubs in Soho' (my favourite of this collection)?

Mackay compounds her problems of tone by taking a very firm hand and insisting, too much, on a rigorous social realism. Many of the stories — the title one, for example, or 'The Most Beautiful Dress in the World', in which the conflict between maternal love and creative self-fulfilment leads to the disintegration of the protagonist — end up by 'explaining' too much. As in the gothic novels of the early 19th century, everything has to have a clear and literal explanation; dream and imagination are clearly separated from the 'real world' and their own reality is thus denied, along with the imaginative capacity of the reader. I actually do not need to know whether the mayhem committed by the mother in 'The Most Beautiful Dress' *really* happened, and I certainly do not want to have my experience of her panic distanced by the unnecessary and clumsy intrusion of the police force.

Since, for most of Mackay's characters, imaginary life is central, crucial to their experience, it is almost mean of her to drag them continually back into social realism. Even in the most supernatural of the stories, such as 'Perpetual Spinach', where the insensitivity of some gentrifying yuppies towards their aged neighbours is appropriately punished, the ending is laboured lest the reader miss the point. The characters, the readers and the potency of the imagination itself: all deserve more respect.

So, despite the accuracy and the delicious prose, this collection left me uneasy: not only in the way that it is obviously meant to (have I looked hard enough at the lives of 'ordinary people'? am I aware of the lurking depths, the strange kinks, the tangled pasts of these superficially dull folk?) but also in a more literary sense.

Can the structure of the traditional short story (which is what these predominantly are) with its lavish piling on of the social detail, with its deft ending which both explains and skews what has gone before, actually carry the emotional weight, the imaginative, psychological density that it is being asked to here? And the answer, here at least, is 'not quite'. □

AMERICA

Partisans reviewed

Michael Sprinker

The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s
ALAN WALD *North Carolina* £30.90 & £12.90

PARTLY THROUGH their own efforts of self-promotion, the New York intellectuals have in recent years been more widely discussed than any other group in American intellectual history, with the possible exception of the Founding Fathers. One might reasonably wonder, then, whether this latest study by Alan Wald could offer either significant new evidence or distinctive views on those writers who were constellated around *Partisan Review* during the 1930s, and later split into the separate orbits of *Dissent* and *Commentary*. Thankfully, the answer is 'yes', on both counts.

Wald's research is exhaustive, encompassing interviews, archival work and a thorough reading of the published writings by major and minor figures. No one is likely to tell us more about these people in the near future. Nor will anyone do so with greater honesty and fairness — least of all those among the principals who are still living; their own highly biased memoirs show this all too clearly. Wald's book is signally free from that tendency to settle old scores and rewrite the past which has characterised the spate of recent autobiographies.

This is not to say that the book lacks analytic or political focus. As his sub-title indicates, Wald has chosen a particular optic to focus the often fissiparous tendencies among the New York intellectuals. His overall view of the forces that caused them to coalesce as an identifiable faction is summarised early on: 'It is precisely the attempt by the founders of the tradition of the New York intellectuals to develop an anti-Stalinist revolutionary communism that distinguishes them from the pure and simple anti-Communists of the 1930s and after . . . Moreover, it was the abandonment of an opposition to Stalinism on anti-capitalist premises that sapped the movement of its most positive qualities in the years following World War II.' The 'decline' of the New York intellectuals does not refer to any diminution in their cultural or ideological power — although these may now be on the wane, as the centre of gravity in American intellectual life shifts from the closely-knit community of writers living in and around Manhattan to the major universities. Rather, Wald claims that their distinctive programme and authentic contribution began to fade with the onset of the Cold War and their assimilation to the consensus of anti-Sovietism during the 1950s.

His strategy for measuring the group's achievements and failures stays largely within the bounds of conventional historical narrative. The story begins with the Jewish internationalism that motivated the group around Elliot Cohen and the *Menorah Journal* during the 1920s, moves through the period when many of those later identified as New York intellectuals (and not only they) became members or sympathisers of the Communist Party, and recounts the revulsion against Stalinism and the CPUSA during the 1930s and the general drift towards Trotskyism that led to the founding of *Partisan Review* in December 1937. For Wald, these were the finest hours of the New York intellectuals, when their anti-Stalinism was also steadfastly anti-capitalist.

World War II changed all that, driving a wedge between the revolutionary socialism most of the New Yorkers still nominally professed and the actual political possibilities of the post-war situation. Although Wald's account tends to slight it, the truth is that from 1946 until the CPUSA split after the Soviet invasion of Hungary, it was the only mass revolutionary organisation in the USA. The effect of opposition to the CPUSA during the late 1940s and '50s could only be to reinforce the Cold War anti-communist consensus — a point which the record of a large number of New York intellectuals on McCarthyism makes most luridly. Their opposition to the witch-hunt was feeble at best.

What provoked the manifest right turn among the anti-Stalinist left? For the most part, Wald eschews explanation for description, but in the closing pages of his study he offers several possible causes. These can be summarised as follows: 1) a general decline in the class struggle at home and abroad which left intellectuals bereft of any revolutionary causes with which to identify; 2) an initial theoretical confusion between anti-Stalinism and anti-communism *tout court* which readily evolved into the view of American imperialism as 'the lesser evil'; 3) the co-option of independent intellectuals into comfortable positions either in the universities or the print media; 4) the distance of these intellectuals from existing socialist organisations.

Wald's fourth explanation is obvious enough and links up with the third. He is reluctant to focus on the careerism of the New York Intellectuals, but it is difficult not to see a strong correlation between their drift away from movement politics and their attainment of relative material comfort and security. Number two has the obvious attraction of empirical immediacy: it accords more or less with the New Yorkers' account of themselves, although it draws quite different conclusions. The first seems implausible on the face of it, if only because the class struggle globally was scarcely quiescent after the war. There were struggles enough internationally with which to have identified — Cuba, Algeria, Indochina, Greece, China — but in every instance a myopic view of the Soviet Union, scarcely distinguishable from the Truman Doctrine and the containment strategies of the Dulleses, rendered the revolutionary particularity of these movements invisible to the New Yorkers.

Domestically, the acid test of their socialism was McCarthyism, which took out a generation of the left intelligentsia and poisoned the waters of American intellectual life to this day. This episode is readily comprehensible as an instance of class struggle — its real agenda being the purging of leftists from the labour movement — even if the New York intellectuals never saw it that way.

We are left, then, with an explanation that combines the factors of theoretical confusion and

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political softness. But, more pointedly, we might conclude that the limits of the New York intellectuals' militancy left them vulnerable to the theoretical errors they made virtually from the first. By distancing themselves from the actual practice of revolutionary politics, they created the airless environment in which anti-communism could readily thrive. And, if we're to draw lessons from their example, the most immediate surely concerns the dangers of imagining oneself to be committed to revolutionary socialism without ever having to bear the burden of concrete revolutionary struggles. □

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SOUTH ASIA

A bomb of one's own

Tariq Ali

Pakistan's Nuclear Development
ASHOK KAPUR *Croom Helm* £30

IN THE EARLY 1960s, the American mathematician and satirical singer, Tom Lehrer, wrote a prophetic song entitled 'Who's Next?'. It's theme was the spread of nuclear weapons to countries such as South Africa, Israel, Egypt. Lehrer contended that 'me-tooism' would catch on. From the mouths of satirists . . .

China got the bomb. Who's next? India, of course. India got the bomb. Who's next? Pakistan, alas . . . In the late '70s the then leader of Pakistan, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, swore that 'We would eat grass, if necessary, but we will not be left behind.' It is a commonplace that leaders who commit their countries to eating grass are never likely to consume it themselves, but in this case Bhutto's threat to manufacture an 'Islamic Bomb' was taken seriously by the West. The fact that Libya had promised unlimited funds did not go down to well in Washington or, for that matter, anywhere else. The decision sealed Bhutto's fate. It united every ruling faction in Washington against him and even the liberal sections of the State Department were in favour of toppling him. Carter despatched Kissinger to Pakistan. Bhutto claimed that Kissinger warned him to desist or 'we'll make a horrible example out of you'. This claim was made in one of his death-cell testimonies, but it was never denied.

History abounds in ironies. Professor Ashok Kapur's book is a meticulous account of how the decision to go nuclear divided Pakistan's nuclear establishment. Leading scientists — men like I.H. Usmani and Dr Abdus Salam — were utterly hostile to the 'Kahuta Project'. They were overruled by politicians and generals. More pliable creatures were sought and found. One of these was a nuclear fanatic — A. Q. Khan. Bhutto was removed because of his nuclear fantasies. General Zia has continued on the same course — at least on the nuclear front — but he has proved himself indispensable. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan made the General a frontier-guard of the Free World. Washington forgot its former objections; for his part, the General who uses the prefix of Islam to talk about anything and everything has been careful not to use it in relation to the bomb.

In a recent interview with an Indian journalist, Pakistan's Dr Strangelove proudly admitted that his country had the bomb. The news was splashed around the world. What is obvious is that such an interview was impossible without the connivance of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence. Their aim was and remains to keep India guessing about Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability and its intentions. In a subsequent interview with *Time* magazine, General Zia denied that they had the bomb, but agreed that they were only 'a screwdriver away'. And so the debate continues to this day.

Kapur's study relies heavily on published sources, which are at least sufficient to prove that the generals are up to no good. The Israelis, in particular, have carefully monitored Pakistan's nuclear development and, being past masters in the art of nuclear deception themselves, have a fairly good idea as to what is going on in the uranium enrichment plant in Kahuta. Pakistan probably has a nuclear capacity of seven devices a year. What it lacks is a weapons delivery system.

Once the Afghan war is over and Gorbachev pulls out his troops, the generals in Pakistan will come under very heavy pressure from Washington to cease their nuclear programme. Who knows, but the very men who put Zia where he is might then remove him and replace him with Bhutto's daughter . . .

Kapur paints an awesome picture of Pakistan's nuclear development. What the book lacks is an E. P. Thompsonian blast against the very concept of a nuclear South Asia. It is nothing short of obscene that countries such as India and Pakistan (or China for that matter), who face real problems in modernising their political-economic structures and preparing for the 21st century, are quite happy to spend billions of dollars on a futile quest for nuclear parity. The safety standards in South Asia are appalling, even as far as ordinary factories are concerned. What is probably happening to workers in the nuclear plants defies the imagination.

In the past, India has often appealed to the Big Powers to leave the Indian Ocean alone and keep it nuclear-free. It would be a tremendous leap forward if this appeal were extended to the military-nuclear establishments in Delhi and Islamabad so that South Asia could also become a nuclear-free zone. □

The paper hat

Richard Bush

Here are your owners — two brothers,
Between them, their proud old poppa.
Their wheat grows miles to the horizon.
Combines turn the yellow darker
As they pass, moving back and forth
Painlessly, like typeface
Settling on a page.
Out come the women, hands held to foreheads.
There are your workers (the bosses
In this case) looking like workers.

Back in the house is the son
With the bad leg, the one
With the hole in the heart, the one
Destined for Manhattan and alcohol.
His stories have titles like
'The Outcast', 'Fitting In',
'My Friend the Cow',
'Uncle Come Down From Charlotteville' and
'What's gotten in to Katzburger?'.

He once had a paper hat he'd made in school.
Kept it for years.

PAPERBACKS

Old flames

Jenny Turner

AND SO, LIFE imitates art. Leon Edel, the American biographer of Henry James, writes **Writing Lives** (Norton, £5.25), a 'Principia Biographica' inspired by essays he wrote about the writing of his *Henry James*. Life, and art, and biography (the form which brings life into art) are in crisis. Our technocratic society privileges science over the 'commonalities of existence' and needs biography to recover the sense of 'man as creative enigma'. Because an enigma is something static, Edel's argument is defensive and scientistic, all rules and methods and Thou Shalt Nots. And the crisis, in a curious and cunning way, is deeply personal. It makes you think of one of James' own American tourists on a trip to the Old World, trying stolidly to be all gay and ludic and Parisian. Because Edel's theory misses out on biography's potential to be a *critical* (as opposed to crisis-ridden) form, he's all tied up in such tropes.

Biography can be about showing us the ways personal and world-historical motives interact. For it is when people feel they have a personal stake in history that they start trying to make it, and this is true of the saintliest saint as it is of the hackiest hack. Eileen Kelly's **Mikhail Bakunin: A Study in the Psychology and Politics of Utopianism** (Yale, £8.95) works this interaction very well. As a study of Bakunin and his fellow superfluous men it is really a study in the mindblowing sexiness of ideas. Bakunin's older and more temperate colleague Alexander Horzen is quoted on his first meeting with Hegel's Absolute. 'Fear vanishes, there is the shore, the beautiful leaves of fantasy are gone, but the succulent fruits of reality are there . . . I read to the end with a beating heart, with a sort of solemnity.'

The study is so empathetic you cannot but palpitate too. You're stuck in the middle of a bleak, expressionist expanse, a country with no politics or social life, where the Ego Rampant has more reality than food or air or human beings. These intellectuals' alienation is total: 'society sees us as unhealthy growths on its body, and we see society as a pile of dung,' Bakunin writes. He and his friends misunderstood the overcoming of alienation as a personal and imperative (i.e. religious) quest rather than as a social and merely possible (political) one. In this way the book, and

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the general atmosphere of Tsarist Russia, are more directly relevant than they at first appear.

From the notices quoted on the back of Kelly's book it would seem that she has been well received for writing a hatchet-job on some 19th-century Qadafi-type loony lefty, proving (inevitably) the great liberal maxim that 'utopian psychology . . . leads inevitably to the furtherance of tyranny'. Biography, you see, can only really do extended footnotes or mathematical proofs to a history which, when it boils down to it, is made up solely of the word 'inevitably'. In this respect it is good to read Maurice Cranston's **Jean-Jacques: The Early Life and Works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau** (Peregrine, £5.95), which is a lucid and action-packed account of an amazingly accidental life.

In Cranston's hands the tension between his subject's own *Confessions* and other sources is fruitful. On the one hand, Rousseau was entirely expedient: he swapped religion, did music theory, abandoned his children, wrote the revolutionary *Discourses* (his road to Damascus being the sight of prize money offered in a magazine) entirely in order to keep body and soul together. On the other, he had a good memory (and was one of the first thinkers to preserve it for posterity). Memory in the hands of committed autobiographers is empowering, and Rousseau's was inspired as much by love as by the more famous guilt.

Mrs Delarivier Manley (1673-1724), playwright and first lady of Grub Street, is most infamous for her volumes of collected contemporary scandal, described by Winston Churchill as 'the lying inventions of a prurient and filthy underworld, served up to those who relish them and paid for by party interest and political malice'. In other words she exposed the sex behind Whiggery and the politics behind affairs of the heart. A most definitely besmirched young temple (the man she married for money turned out to be a bigamist) her method was underhand (it could hardly be otherwise) but it leaves a grabbing record of life as lived behind great men. Fidelis Morgan's **A Woman of No Character** (Faber, £3.95) tells Mrs M's Story mostly by her own writings with authorial interjections where needed. Fidelis Morgan writes very well indeed and the book is sensitively structured. As for Mrs M, as her good friend Jonathan 'Celia shits' Swift said, she writes 'as if she had about two thousand epithets and fine words packed up in a bag, and that she pulled them out by handfuls, and strewed them on her paper, where about once in five hundred times they happen to be right.'

Simone Weil wrote *L'Enracinement* — **The Need for Roots** (trans. A.F. Wills, Ark, £3.95) — in 1942 for General de Gaulle. It was intended to provide a philosophical foundation for the Fifth Republic. How do you breathe inspiration into a people? Weil's famous cynicism consists in her belief that order, beauty and truth have always existed and that it is 'the people's' fault that they cannot achieve it. She develops a method for getting there which, in its ambivalent mixture of hierarchism and syndicalism, suggests interesting parallels to be traced with movements like Action Française. Instead T.S. Eliot's introduction havers on that Weil's sources and argumentation don't matter because she is paradoxical and saintly and a beautiful soul.

A recent article in the *TLS* by R. W. Johnson said that what unites the French intelligentsia, right or left, is their total disregard for socioeconomic realities. This allows for a freer if thinner mode of speculation and Gaston Bachelard's 1938 **The Psychoanalysis of Fire** (trans. Alan C. M. Ross, Quartet, £4.95) is very much in this spirit. As psychoanalysis it's about replacing primal anxiety with *reverie*, the pleasant state of lolling by the fire, gazing into its depths and rubbing oneself. Rubbing sticks together signifies not cold or the beginnings of culture but original and guilt-free nookie. The history of scientific discourse about fire, argues Bachelard, is riddled with attempts to cover sexual desire with a veneer of scientific and economic necessity. But we can still overcome our abject history: 'To admit that one has erred is to pay the most signal homage to the perspicacity of one's mind. By doing so we relive our education, intensify it, illuminate it with converging rays of light. We also externalise, proclaim and teach it. Then is born pure intellectual enjoyment.'

And what of *use*, I ask? — maybe because I reached puberty during the energy crisis, learning joylessly about sex against a background of pennypinching, five-year insulation plans and aluminium double-glazing. Actually, if it was me, I'd call this an Anatomy, as the presence of Northrop Frye as Introducer suggests. It is hokey and witty and, yes, illuminating, hovering emblematically on the threshold between ritual and system. Bachelard likes alchemy best, which 'realises purely and simply the sexual characteristics of the fireside reverie. Far from being a description of the objective phenomena, it is an attempt to inscribe human love at the heart of things'. The will to knowledge as love: it's a long time, isn't it, since anyone has dared to suggest such a thing?

SHELF LIFE

I WANTED to write something about Malcolm Bradbury's ('should be a cult') book *Mensonge* (Deutsch, £5.95). This sequel to *Welcome to Slaka*, his account of funny East Europeans, is all about funny structuralists and deconstructionists (plus, as ever, funny feminists); it is presumably intended 1) to show his colleagues at the University of East Anglia that even though he doesn't spend too much time on campus he's read all this serious stuff but just doesn't let it affect his life and 2) to make money. Sadly, to concentrate potential media assistance with the latter project, it is strictly embargoed till 3 September. In any case, the first short word that came to mind when I read it turns out to be one of several recently banned from the newly puritan *Melody Maker*, so I would have had to restrict my comments anyway, out of solidarity with IPC journalists.

Instead, a more complex indicator of stock British attitudes to European thought. This is the phenomenon which appears sporadically in the more serious sections of the press and which could perhaps be called 'French Without Tears': those articles which set out to condense and explain modern French intellectual culture for an insular audience. With 1968 anniversaries approaching (and no embargo on *that* till '88), there'll be more of these than usual, and in fact we've already seen a significant one, an essay-review of half a dozen books on the French intelligentsia by R.W. Johnson in the *TLS* on 31 July. It is worth looking at this little essay, because Johnson (author of a book on the French Left and Fellow of Politics at Oxford) is a frequent commentator on French affairs, and because, despite his relative sophistication, he illustrates the pitfalls of the genre.

Having stated that the French intelligentsia has fallen into 'irreversible decline', he lists the causes. 'They' have lost the 'ideological lodestone' of the Communist Party and Marxism — which is fair enough, though his conflation ignores the not unimportant fact that most Left post-'68 theorists have been writing *against* the PCF. Many great thinkers have died — but not a mention of all those who live on: Deleuze, Castoriadis, Touraine, Virilio, Baudrillard, Gorz, Guattari . . . They were threatened by their aristocratic status and arcane language — but his only example of the latter is a couple of perfectly intelligible lines from a recent book by Keith Reader. Or, they have 'gone pop' — but, while he cites the *nouveaux philosophes* as models of media hype, he admits that their work was pretty vacuous in the first place. Now, regrettably, intellectuals choose to write for *Le Monde* instead of *Tel Quel* — but *Le Monde* has long been a centre for serious debate and *Tel Quel* long ceased publication. Damned as elitists, damned as populists.

Thesis established, Johnson goes on to say more or less interesting things about more or less interesting books, holding this together with a series of negative assertions. French intellectuals may have '*élan*' but are swayed by fashion. Even the Marxist current knew nothing about economics. Last year's student movement was 'the very model of conservative, respectable pressure group politics'. *Libération* is not a quality paper because it sells only 100,000 copies, has less news than the *Guardian* and carries soft porn. It is 'conventional' to celebrate May '68 as the birth of feminism, ecology, etc., but it was 'also an end, a defeat'. And so on. The problem is not just that I think all these claims are wrong (even *Libé*'s circulation: now 260,000) but that sweeping assertions and vast generalisations are inevitable if you believe that 20 years' writing and politics can in any useful way be interpreted in 3,000-word articles, or that individual careers can be reduced to an undifferentiated 'they'. Even (as with Johnson) in its better form, it's a bizarre exercise, one which wouldn't be feasible elsewhere in Western Europe.

Someone whose admission of disorientation in May '68 Johnson cites as proof of the Events as an 'end' is Daniel Cohn-Bendit. To confound the obituarists of a generation, he'll be at London's Battersea Arts Centre on 9 September at 8pm to talk about 'Ecology and Liberation', along with the black US poet June Jordan, on her first, long-awaited, visit to Britain. Now, back to the 'feminist hell-hole' of the *NS* literary pages, as they're called by Quentin Oates, the man who republishes *Daily Telegraph* book reviews in *The Bookseller*.

Malcolm Imrie

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Ken v. Kellner: round two

Peter Kellner, London N6
I am flattered that Ken Livingstone should have quoted me so extensively in his column last week. I am appalled that he should deploy those quotes to misrepresent my views so completely.

For the record, Ken was quite wrong to say I 'have argued that Labour must abandon hope of forming a majority government and orient to coalition with the Liberals'.

What I wrote (*NS* 19 June) in one of the bits Ken did not quote was: 'Labour's choice is simply stated. It can either come to terms with the Alliance, or seek to marginalise it'. And later, to underline that dilemma: 'The brutal alternatives facing Labour cannot be evaded: whether to trade with the Liberals or to freeze them out of Britain's centre-left terrain'.

Between those two statements I explored the consequences of both alternatives. Ken quoted from my assessment of the first option and asserted that it is my preferred choice. It is not. The point of my article was neither to advocate nor reject a deal with the Liberals but to outline the harshness of the decisions that face Labour following the general election.

What's art for?

Maureen Lawrence, Co. Tipperary, Eire
In arguing that art is 'playing an inglorious placebo role in the ultimate weaning' from religion, I think Waldemar Januszczak confuses several important points (*NS* 14 August). He states that the one thing his random sample of art objects from recent history have in common is ultimate explicability. However, since the abandonment of 'realism' in fine art, the principal subject of art has been art itself. The intention of modern artists is not to mystify, but to explore new formal means of expression.

The extreme subjectivity of modern art reflects the individualism which is ultimately derived from the Romantic Movement of the late 18th century. Certainly, the first non-objective art works in this century were produced in Russia, where the realistic painting tradition was weak, and the religious icon painting tradition strong. To quote Malevitch as support for an argument for the spiritual basis of the role of modern art is, therefore, a rather selective use of evidence.

Medieval relics were considered precious because of their associations with the saints and they were part of a feudal economic society. The value of modern art objects is created by their function as commodities, as Terry Eagleton pointed out (*NS* 20 March).

Walter Dorin, Edgware, Middx
So Waldemar Januszczak believes that the Mexian Revolution is (best) remembered on wonky celluloid. Thank you very much Rivera, Orozco, and Siqueiros for spending the greater part of your lives recording it.

If, as he maintains, art has taken the place of religion, then it's all the more reason for frequenting your friendly corner chapel or prayer meeting house and avoiding like the plague the cathedrals (especially the newer edifices) and the other establishments of the High Church. The vast majority of the populace however remain atheists and agnostics.

Unwilling bedfellows

Robert Hill, Organiser, Artists' Campaign against Tobacco Sponsorship
Congratulations on having a food writer who, far from restricting himself to the gourmet scene, recommends subsidies for nutritious food (*NS* 7 August) — a measure that should appeal to all who look forward to a healthier nation and a less harassed NHS. Likewise there is no single measure that would advance preventive medicine so much as the banning of all tobacco promotion, in line with the advice of the British Medical Association.

But the government is schizophrenic about tobacco. The Department of Health is agin it, the Exchequer likes the tax bonus. The Sports Minister is turning against it, but not so the Arts Minister. In fact his new policy — that theatres must top up a dwindling public subsidy by going into the market-place and touting for commercial sponsorship — is bound to result (through competition) in forcing them into bed with the sort of company they'd prefer not to keep: such as manufacturers of an addictive and potentially lethal drug.

A more coherent and harmonised attitude on the government's part would result in the ending of tobacco sponsorship, and would save arts bodies from having to solicit for trade in the least salubrious quarters of town.

Bantustan fraud

L. Clarke, Uxbridge, Middx
Lest it be thought that Phillip van Niekerk's prophecy (*NS* 7 August) of a South Africa which becomes 'a wasteland filled with refugees and corpses', is an exaggeration, that country's racial land-and-resources confrontation is already becoming a major issue, and lies in part behind the present miners' strike. Two inescapable facts may well sound South Africa's death-knell.

The first is that the vaunted 'homelands' policy gives whites 30 times more land per person than blacks: 405,000 square miles for 4.9 million whites; only 66,000 square miles for 27.5 million blacks.

The second fact is that this unjust distribution (and apartheid itself) is based on an enormous historical fraud, devised by the white minority to 'justify' their false historical ownership of 86 per cent of South Africa. And a fraud it is: South Africans and overseas archaeologists have proved it over and over again during the past few decades (e.g., Fouche, Mason, Maggs, Davenport, Cornevin, Fagan, Scully, van der Merwe and many more).

This year's whites-only South African election, in which nearly five out of every six whites voted for parties committed to the preservation of this Bantustan fraud, shows that the whites refuse to give up any land or resources to which their own professional historians have proved they have but a forged title. And the blacks have shown that they will never rest until South Africa's farming and mineral wealth ceases to pour almost wholly into the pockets of those who will fake even history itself to satisfy their arrogance and greed.

Desperately though one might wish that South Africa's bitter Boer rulers might come to their senses, I fear that Mr van Niekerk's prognostication will prove to be chillingly accurate. For would *we* rest if aliens took most of the UK — and lied about it?

Glasnost in Britain?

Scott McCracken, Dalston, E8
Adam Le Bor and Jane Cameron's Diary (*NS* 14 August) confirmed just what we've always known about the Russians: the USSR is populated by fat apparatchiks, men who cannot talk to their wives about contraception, students who pretend to be on holiday, but are secretly 'handpicked', racist taxi drivers and KGB agents who resemble bears. Oh, and women who don't conform to the Western stereotype of Soviet femininity are 'forceful' and 'sassy' and certainly too much for mere Soviet men. How can there be mutual understanding while such an irreconcilable antagonism exists between our way of life and theirs?

I expect those two diarists are glad to be back in Britain where they can busk unhindered by the police and impartial standards of journalism demonstrate how far 'the limits of *glasnost* are being pushed'.

Down with defeatism

George Galloway MP, Glasgow Hillhead
Mr Roger MacDonald of Ayr (Letters 14 August) completely misses the point of my earlier correspondence — hence his childish insults and talk of 'censorship'. My point is not that Parliamentary Sketch writer Edward Pearce isn't a good writer — of course he is, he's a senior Tory pundit on the *Sunday Times*. The point is that the left has precious few journals (getting fewer), yet some editors insist on giving house room to those political enemies to persistently attack us. Why?

Is it masochism, self-flagellation or is it, as some suspect, a softening up exercise helping to foster defeatist pessimism and despair, the more ready to liquidate ourselves in the morass of

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Liberal/Social Democracy. I read the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman* every week, I just don't want to have to keep checking which one I've got in my hand.

The case of the missing minute books

Brian Harrison, Corpus Christi College, Oxford OX1 4JF

I will be most grateful if any of your readers can help me to locate some important documents in labour history which seem now to be missing.

The Oxford University Labour Club has played a significant role in 20th-century labour politics, but its minute books seem to be missing between the years 1931 and 1971, though the books for 1921-31 and since 1971 are in the Bodleian Library. I cannot believe that the minute books for 1931-71 would have been deliberately destroyed, and we need to consult them if we are to give an adequate account of Oxford's political influence in the history of the University since 1914 that is at present being written. Any reader who could put us on the right track would do us a great service.

Merger mania

John Thomson, Marlborough, Wilts.

It would be nice to think that the political world is waiting with bated breath for the SDP and Liberal parties to sort themselves out, but I don't believe it is realistic (Michael Meadowcroft, *NS* 14 August). Attempts to create a merged party that will satisfy anti-mergerites, pro-mergerites, Liberal loyalists, and even some Owenites are, I fear, doomed to failure. Even if such a merger were to get off the ground, it would be irrelevant to the process of re-alignment on the left. The new party would contain within it a significant number whose political aims are such as to preclude any accommodation with other parties of the left. The opposition to Thatcherism would stay fragmented and muted.

If the national leadership of the Liberal Party cannot obtain a quick agreement from Mr MacLennan and his friends, then it may be necessary for local initiatives to take over with a series of de facto mergers — particularly in those areas where the SDP and the Liberal Party already form the local administration. Failing that, it may be better to forget all about the idea of a merged party. SDP members who share Liberal objectives would join the Liberal Party. Those who don't share Liberal aims would have to do the other thing. Once all that is out of the way, some hard thinking about re-alignment on the left could really begin.

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BACKCHAT

INFRA DIG

Tourist class . . .

Diana Eden

HUMANITY CAN BE divided into those of us who spent our childhood summers sheltering beneath the comforting protection of Redcar's famous pier, and the rest of you who, happy breed, did not. Unaccountably, I have fond memories of windswept, sodden sands, pink tarmac-ed roads, pink candyfloss and, always, my pink-candyflossed pools of vomit — annually providing a useful guideline between boarding house and beach.

Over-excited, childish eyes have self-serving, heartless filters. Did I notice, then, the weary misery of the donkeys on the front? The darned and re-darned stockings of defeated soubrettes in shabby summer shows? The flaking, salt-assaulted paintwork of the arcades along the prom? I noticed none of those. My remembered Redcar is a paradise, a place located halfway between Fairyland and Heaven and only a stepping distance, climate-wise, from the delights of Santa's Grotto.

But *adult* holiday-making is a learnt and serious art, which I have had neither the inclination nor financial wherewithal to cultivate with any regularity. I did sample Salazar's Portugal when a student of 18. There were subversive mutterings in every back-street bar, 'Angola' was the word on all disaffected lips and would-be Latin lovers, soon to be called up, kept dolefully insisting that they and I could 'mak bee-oo-tiful moosic togezer' during their last civilian nights. Alas — priggish, pacifist, unyielding — I remained sexually tone deaf.

But hedonism will apparently out; within the twinkling of a mere 20 years, I took a second holiday, returning to a by now very different Portugal. The unshackled political climate was not, however, the only thing which proved contagious: I had a most moving ten-day tour of every historic lavatory in the Algarve . . .

Then last year (will I never learn?) I wrestled with my mounting disinclination ever to leave the house and flew out to join a friend in Southern Ireland. So gothic, baroque and salaciously intriguing was every aspect of that ill-fated escapade that I shall commit it all to print only when *real* — as distinct from *New Statesman* — money changes hands. Suffice it to say, for this salary, that, after 12 *Grand Guignol* hours, I was flying back to England, home and beauty.

Yet here your plucky foreign correspondent sits again, somewhere to the west of Cork, gazing out across a green-fringed, tranquil bay. Around her, rural Ireland abounds with idiosyncratic joys (beyond the expected horse fairs and the engaging, marathon talkers). One shop still stocks a bumper, looped and belted sanitary protection which I last caught sight of in 1958, and I'm told that the other protection, the one that ensures the relief-inspiring need for those antiquated loops, is enterprisingly marketed under the canny name of 'Cling Film'.

But, no longer a child, it is impossible to claim a nodding acquaintance with sensitivity and feel easy in the role of British visitor in Ireland. The shameful past presents itself on every country road. Long abandoned cottages bear witness to the famine. In a nearby town, our government's militia once stood its gallant guard over a massive store of grain while the entire local population starved to death.

And all the while, to this stranger, in a land abused and wasted by my fathers, friendship, warmth and welcome have been generously extended. So this adult summer finds me embarrassed and reflective, but sheltering, with gratitude and wonder, within Ireland's comforting protection. □

FIRST PERSON

. . . tourist trade

Patricia Holland

ANGELO, ALFONSO, Maria and the others remembered my father with genuine warmth. It had felt like losing a member of the family when they'd heard he had died — such a happy man, always laughing, always energetic, always friendly, *simpatico*. They'd been glad to see him when he'd turned up for his annual fortnight's holiday. Yet my father and his Italian friends had met at the level of fantasy: my father seeing them as the relaxed, uncomplicated inhabitants of a warmer and happier part of the world; they taking his holiday mask for his whole self.

He overlooked — was it wilfully? — the mundane detail of their lives. For him these were lives outside politics, outside commerce, seen against a backdrop of sunshine, red wine and lemon groves. They were lives lived for pleasure — *his* pleasure. Just as the rules of sexual relations allow a man to discount the content of a woman's speech merely to enjoy her femininity ('You look lovely when you're being serious') so my father refused any practical knowledge of his friends, simply relishing their difference from himself.

When my parents first went to Southern Italy 30 years ago — emerging from their poverty-stricken childhoods and wartime privations — unimaginable vistas seemed to open before them. Before the days of travel agents, airline deals and the Autostrada del Sole, tourists were far less numerous and were greeted with curiosity and a personal welcome.

A holiday resort can promise so much. As European prosperity has increased, and holiday makers from the North have come South to find sunshine and sunny personalities, those who live in the South have learned several languages, gained a cosmopolitan outlook and unexpected wealth. At the same time they have overstretched and sometimes compromised themselves as they seek to give the Northerners what they yearn for.

In the problematic exchanges of tourism, the warm structures of goodwill and friendship must inevitably be crossed by the cold structures of commerce. The obligations of hospitality — doing favours, giving gifts, preparing meals — are transformed into sources of income. If every visitor/friend is welcomed with food and shelter, takings will be down. So when does the friendly greeting, the remembered face, the welcoming smile become a necessary simulation, a cynical exploitation of a tourist's expectations? Aren't we all old friends now? But regular visitors are proud of their status. 'They know us here. They know our names and we know theirs. You may get service, but we get friendship.' Yet the 'Hello' of

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recognition is continually confused with the 'Hello' of commerce. To gratify their visitors' expectations, these hosts must sell more than their goods; they must sell their goodwill. Caught in this trap there is an even greater need to reach beyond the cold commercial transaction — in the warmth of a smile lies the escape from cynicism. But this very need is reclaimed and callously transformed by commerce itself.

Amid the mutual misunderstanding and mutual hallucination, worry and suspicion have their place. This year there was an air of tension about. There had been a bad winter. High seas had washed away the beach restaurants and changing huts; the cost of rebuilding them had been considerable. Their owners looked strained and worried as they counted the visitors in. Loud English voices, uncomprehending, could be heard complaining of being ripped off — coffee at £1 a cup! Next time they'll bring a jar of Nescafé. Others, with voices closer to the working class they have recently left behind — poverty and deference within easy memory and not much cash to spare — are determined to enjoy themselves with as little outlay as possible. The anxiety on both sides is dispersed in a determined euphoria. My father would have loved it still.

FOOD

Love apple sauces

Colin Spencer

WE EAT TOMATOES in quantities second only to potatoes. Though brought to Europe in 1523, they have only, however, became a favourite food within this century.

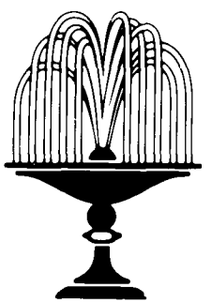
Being of the same family as deadly nightshade, the tomato was at first treated with suspicion — indeed, its leaves are toxic, as are potato leaves. But the Spanish, having eaten it in the New World, continued to eat it in the Old, slicing the fruit and dressing it with oil and vinegar. In Britain and France, it was known as the love apple and thought to be aphrodisiac. The variety then eaten was the yellow one and the fruit was referred to, by an Elizabethan herbalist, as gold and unhealthy.

Once the red kind was brought to Europe in the 18th century, by two Jesuit priests, the tomato slowly found favour — though at first only in Italy and with the poor. It was in Italy that the first tomato sauce was made, eaten (one imagines) as it is now, with pasta or with rice. The first recorded mention of tomato sauce is in an Italian recipe book published in 1778, where it is to be served with fish and meat. The same book gives recipes for stuffing tomatoes. The tomato reached the United States in the first half of the 19th century where it was extensively grown and eaten. It was there that its famous marriage with the navy bean occurred, in Boston, providing the sauce for baked beans.

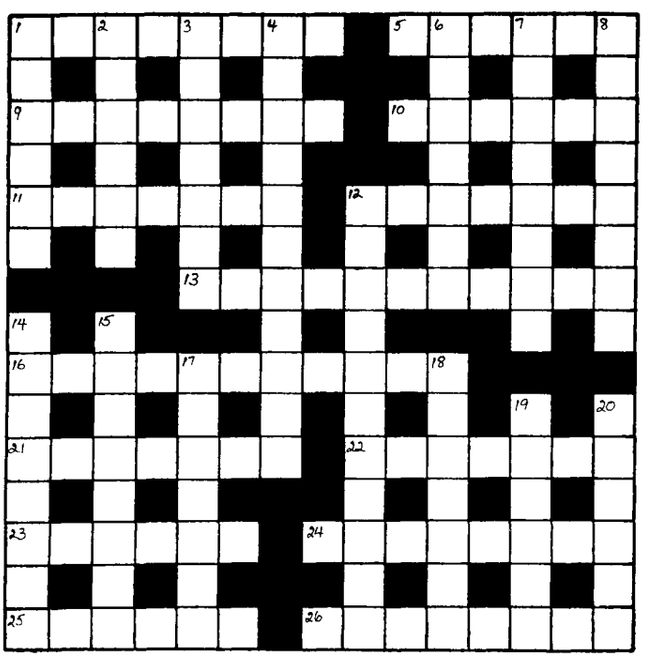
The fruit has a high vitamin C content, especially in the jelly around the seeds — but this is the bit often thrown out in recipes, when they erroneously tell you to de-seed the tomato. Does anyone actually do this, I often wonder? There is an ancient belief that seeds in food do one harm, so perhaps this advice reflects an atavistic notion. In any case, *there is no need* to de-seed a tomato, unless you think the seeds spoil the look of the dish or the sauce.

There are now a bewildering range of varieties, from the large marmande, or beefsteak, tomato to the cherry type. However, it is the flavour that obsesses all tomato lovers. Sickened by the lack of taste in the hothouse Dutch winter tomato, one wants a summer fruit to be ripe and full of that unique flavour. Why is it that, in Mediterranean countries, a tomato, whether plum or pumpkin

Weekend Crossword 1569



Prizes: Copies of the *Collins Gem Crossword Dictionary* for the first ten correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1569, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 14 September.



Name_____

Address_____

_____

ACROSS

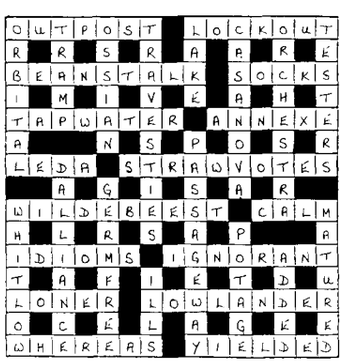
1. A fool trod awkwardly in church (8)
5. The fruit of crime in school (6)
9. Close observers discover a woman among lots of dons (8)
10. Caught in an affair in a secluded place (6)
11. Something which grows when the list is revised (7)
12. The most beautiful have to diet without resentment (7)
13. America is corrupt and good fellowship is unusually dear in it (11)
16. Were close as a bird is embraced by a man (11)
21. To make a girl get into bed is the height of one's ambition (7)
22. A person is after a different name for a flower (7)
23. Cold place in which headless animals fight (6)
24. Novelist who is not in (8)
25. Collect two articles written in Greek (6)
26. Part of a building to give delight (8)

DOWN

1. In spite of failures it seems he makes fresh attempts at passing (6)
2. Plant ten in a soil which is loose (6)
3. Left a girl with a twitch as mad (7)
4. The flower to win people love in place of defence (11)
6. Roused those who are friends to the right (7)
7. Lords holding number one up for starters (8)
8. Mistakenly respects signs of royalty (8)
12. Covering of trees needed for a headquarters just behind the front (11)
14. The Queen is in the distance making a presentation (8)
15. Low place for people in the graduate class (8)
17. Something ugly climbed up into view (7)
18. The resident died before Sam (7)
19. Activity for a month without it turning up (6)
20. Dog born before bird (6)

SETSQUARE

Solution to 1567



Prizewinners to 1567

W. Nicholas Evans
(Mountain Ash, Mid Glam.)
W. A. Carruthers (Chester)
James Crossland (Nottingham)
Muriel Thomas (Westerham, Kent)
P. Baldwin (Chorley, Lancs.)
Mrs M. M. Kalischer
(Moortown, Leeds)
Mr A. Jetty (Harpenden, Herts.)
K. E. Jermy
(Churchdown, Gloucester)
Rosemary Marsden (London NW3)
Murray McCartney
(Harare, Zimbabwe)

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shaped, has an intense and delicious flavour, while fruit from the same seeds grown here looses the intensity? Is it the soil?

It can't be. Tomatoes will grow anywhere. The Mediterranean countries have plants growing wild at the side of the road where workmen have spat the seeds out from their noon snacks. I can only think that tomatoes need sun and that the hotter the sun is the more the plant will thrive and taste. But it is also more than that: if the fruit ripens on the plant, it tastes better than if picked green. Taking the fruit prematurely from its source of nourishment enfeebles the taste. And all commercial tomatoes are transported green, to protect them from damage in picking and packing, having previously been treated with the ripening hormone ethylene (which, of course, occurs naturally in fruit that is left on the plant).

Italy is the home of simple tomato cookery, though Spain and Greece dispense excellent tomato snacks to their children when we would tend to buy a packet of crisps. The most delicious tomato sauce contains the fruit and little else. Puncture two or three pound of tomatoes, or slice them in two, throw them into a pan, cover with a tight fitting lid and place over a very low flame. Let the tomatoes cook in their own juices for about 10 minutes. Leave to cool then push the fruit through a sieve. To the tomatoes you could add two or three crushed cloves of garlic, or a sliced onion, or a sliced red or green pepper. To alter the flavour more you could add a few chillies, or herbs such as basil or summer savory. This sauce will seem a little thin, so it could be served as it is for a soup, either hot or chilled. For a thicker sauce you reduce the liquid over a flame.

A simple sauce for pasta is made by peeling a pound of tomatoes (by blanching them), chopping them coarsely and throwing them into a pan with two tablespoons of olive oil, three cloves of garlic crushed and a couple of rashes of diced bacon or, if you don't eat meat, a few mushrooms. Sauté for about five minutes, then season and add a tablespoon of capers and some chopped basil leaves. Use for spaghetti and sprinkle with some fresh parmesan cheese.

These last two recipes come from Tuscany and Provence respectively:

Panzanella *(serves 4)*
8 slices stale bread (brown or white)
1 small cucumber
1 large onion
1lb tomatoes, peeled
Generous handful basil, finely chopped
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Soak the bread in water until soft, then drain and squeeze dry, crumble the bread up and place into a bowl. Dice the cucumber small, grate the onion, chop the tomatoes. Add to the bread with the rest of the ingredients. Stir well and leave for a few hours in a cool place. Use as a salad or as part of a first course.

Tomates à la Provençale *(serves 2)*
2 large marmande tomatoes
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon oregano, finely chopped
2 tablespoons toasted breadcrumbs
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon olive oil

Slice the tomatoes in half, score the tops in a grill design about a quarter of an inch deep, sprinkle the tops with the garlic and oregano and press the bits gently down into the flesh. Mix the seasoning with the breadcrumbs, sprinkle over the tomatoes, then dribble a little oil over each. Place under a hot grill until the top begins to bubble and brown. □

'Have you anything involving rocking the art world by its very foundations?'

Weekend competition

No 2990 **Set by Margaret Rogers**
From kindergarten to university, a teacher's lot is not, it appears, a happy one. Could we have songs giving voice to their grumbles — not *necessarily* Gilbertian — as the shadow of termtime draws near. Max 16 lines by 9 September.

No 2987 **Set by Norman Geras**
Apt or incongruous sponsorships.

Report **By Babe Bio**
Well, congrachulashons Norm: you forgot to give them a limit. As Katie Mallet so corshessly puts it: 'No doubt some daft sod will send you ten miles of computer read out to get through.' Miles! We got bluddy *leagues* of suggestions. The only way out was to get really tuff and pick only those that were *brillyernt* — wich nocked the pile down to size in no time at all. Two quid for each published entry (though I'm still not shore that wot's really hapening out there in the wurld of sports and art isn't stranjer than any of your fixions) and a very spesherl welcum to Alf Dubs.

The Richard Luce Live Theatre Award.
NAOMI MARKS

The Oliver North Chair of Political Philosophy.
WATSON WEEKS

The Derek Jameson Stop-Those-Greasy-Greeks-Getting-Their-Filthee-Fingers-On-Our-Elgin-Gorblimey-Marbles-Stone-The-Crows Trust.
JONATHAN FERNSIDE

The Jeffrey Archer Travel Award.
TIM HOPKINS

The Edwina Currie Retreat.
ALF DUBS

The Worshipful Company of Shirtmakers Grand National.
KATE SHORT

The Guinness Fiddling Championships.
KATIE MALLETT

The Prudential Hang-gliding championships.
NOEL PETTY

The Nissan Lectureship in Trade Union Practice.
RUSSELL LUCAS

The 7-Up Sexual Olympiad.
WILL BELLENGER

The *New Statesman* exhibition 'The Golden Age of British Telecom'.
CHAS F. GARVEY

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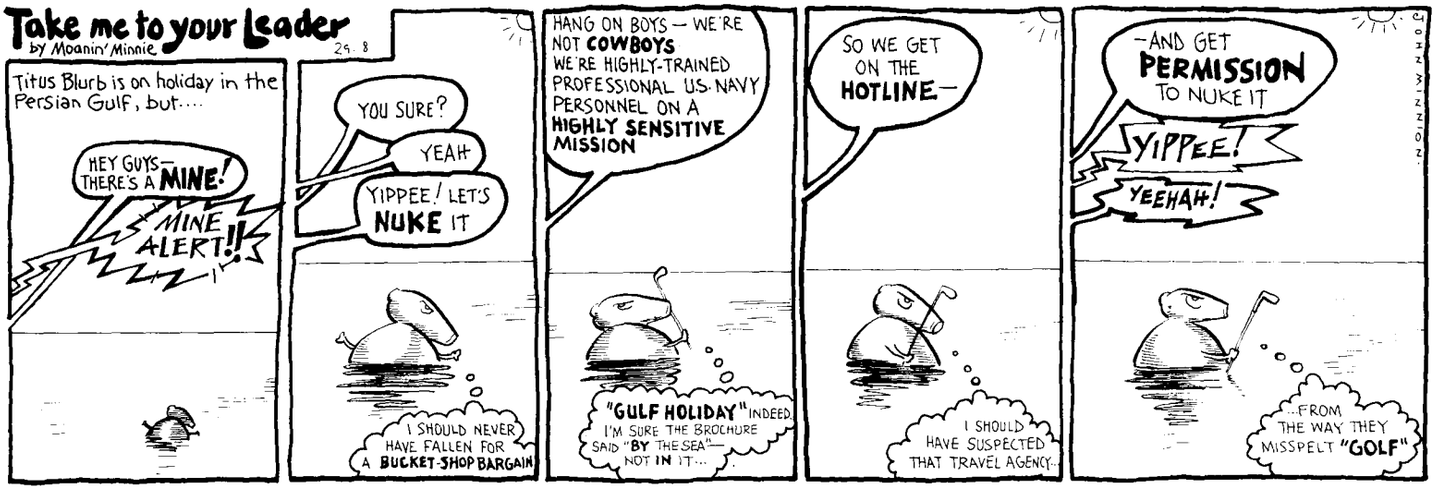

Take me to your Leader
by Moanin' Minnie
Titus Blurb is on holiday in the Persian Gulf, but....
HEY GUYS— THERE'S A MINE!
MINE ALERT!!
YOU SURE?
YEAH
YIPPEE! LET'S NUKE IT
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE FALLEN FOR A BUCKET-SHOP BARGAIN
HANG ON BOYS — WE'RE NOT COWBOYS WE'RE HIGHLY-TRAINED PROFESSIONAL U.S. NAVY PERSONNEL ON A HIGHLY SENSITIVE MISSION
"GULF HOLIDAY" INDEED. I'M SURE THE BROCHURE SAID "BY THE SEA"— NOT IN IT...
SO WE GET ON THE HOTLINE—
I SHOULD HAVE SUSPECTED THAT TRAVEL AGENCY...
—AND GET PERMISSION TO NUKE IT
YIPPEE!
YEEHAH!
...FROM THE WAY THEY MISSPELT "GOLF"

Chess

NIGEL SHORT won the Kleinwort Grieveson British Championship by a street, equalling the record score that Mestel made in the heat of 1976. Final placings of the prizewinners were: 1. Short 9½; 2-3. Conquest and Ivanov (Canada) 8; 4-5. King and Plaskett 7½; 6-11. Adams, Gallagher, Mestel, Pritchett, Speelman, Wells 7; 12-17. Bellin, Hodgson, Martin, Pein, Rogers (Australia), and Thomas 6½ (all out of 11). In the second week Short hardly seemed to be part of the tournament — he had got so far away that the rest gave up any thought of chasing. Defending champion Jon Speelman did once bob up the table to put in a challenge, but his provocative efforts to produce a decisive game resulted only in a fiasco:

Short-Speelman, Swansea 1987, Rd9. Pirc Defence.
1. e4 g6 2. d4 d6 3. Nc3 Bg7 4. Be3 a6 5. a4 Nf6 6. h3 b6 7. Nf3 0-0 8. Bc4 Nc6 This doesn't fit in well with Black's previous moves, which are geared to the counter . . . c7-c5. 8. . . e6 or even 8. . . Nxe4!? might be tried, though I would say that the position shows why 4 . . . c6 is preferable to 4. . . a6. On c6 the pawn supports a possible . . . b7-b5 *and* controls d5. **9. e5 Ne8 10. Bf4 Na5 11. Ba2 c5 12. dxc5 bxc5 13. 0-0 Rb8 14. exd6 Nxd6?** For better or worse, he had to be content with 14 . . . exd6. **15. Nd5!** Short has just been playing normal moves and suddenly the game falls into his hands. The threat is Nxe7 and Bxd6. In the absence of a good line Speelman blunders into one of the worst. **e6?? 16. Bxd6 1-0.**

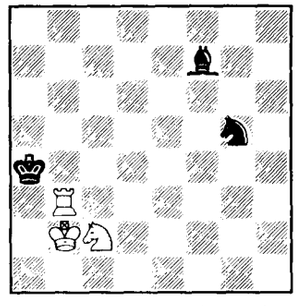
Of those who trailed in after Short, the one who did most in the way of exceeding expectations was Stuart Conquest, who was very solid throughout the tournament on his way to dividing 2nd-3rd prizes with the tough and experienced Igor Ivanov. Ivanov must also have been quite pleased at the way he snatched a high place by winning his last three games. At least this may bring him some consolation for losing out to Spragget in the debate over which Canadian should get the home country's reserved place in the St John candidate's matches. Whether anybody not otherwise qualified should be allowed into the candidates' stage like that is another question — to which I would have thought the answer was obviously 'NO'.

Incidentally, the Kleinwort Grieveson British Chess Championship seems to be one of the few things that still imbues membership of the Commonwealth with some significance. There is no doubt that the presence of leading Commonwealth players enhances an event that has become one of the world's major national championships. So why wasn't Niaz Murshed, the young GM from Bangladesh, playing? He wasn't able to get a visa. An ex-Russian Canadian is given a visa at short notice, while a player from Bangladesh, who has participated before, is refused. Spot the difference.

The game I admired most in Swansea was Jim Plaskett's Queen-sacrifice against Malcolm Pein:

Pein-Plaskett, Swansea 1987, Rd 8. French Winawer.
1. d4 e6 2. e4 d5 3. Nc3 Bb4 4. e5 c5 5. a3 Bxc3+ 6. bxc3 Ne7 7. Nf3 Qa5 8. Bd2 Nbc6 9. a4 Bd7 10. Be2 f6 11. 0-0 c4 12. Re1 fxe5 13. dxe5 0-0 14. Bf1 Rf5 15. g3 Raf8 16. Re3 h6 17. Be1 Qc5 18. Bh3. Perhaps he should have seen it coming? Seeing isn't always believing. **Qxe3! 19. fxe3 Rxf3 20. Bg2 R3f7 21. Qh5 Rf5 22. Qe2 Nxe5 23. g4 Nf3+ 24.Kh1 R5f6** Black must have good compensation. **25. Bg3 e5 26. e4 Bc6 27. Bxe5** This almost looks like an oops-missed-that (27 . . . Nxe5 28. exd5), but Black's grip is too strong to be shaken. **Re6 28. Bxf3** 28. Bg3 seems better to me, but I missed the *post mortem*. **Rxe5 29. Bg2 Ng6 30. Rf1 Rxf1+ 31. Qxf1 dxe4 32. Qxc4+ Kh8 33. Kg1 e3! 34. Bf1 Re4 0-1.**

To spur on composers who are labouring over the creation of original studies for our **Assiac Memorial Tourney** (entries to me at the *NS* by 31 December), here is a study that shows how an apparently ordinary position can generate a breath-taking forcing sequence. It's by A.G. Kopnin and it won first prize in the 1958/9 *New Statesman* competition. White is to play and win. An extract from the judges' report by Cheron and Lommer may be an aid to solving: 'An extraordinary domination . . . 12 of White's 14 moves by the Rook and 11 of Black's 13 by the Bishop . . . A real hunt, with the *coup de grâce* very properly administered by His Majesty.'



Last week's position [3k4/3p4/1P1Pp1P1/7r/8/2B5/b1P5/4K3] White wins with **1. g7 e5 2. b7 Rh1+ 3. Kd2 Rb1 4. Bb4! Rxb4 5. c4! Bxc4 6. Kc3.**

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

A gang halted a Cynon Valley coal train by placing railway sleepers across the line. Railway police arrived before they could steal the 100 tons of coal from the wagons. It was the latest in a series of ambushes. — *The Independent*
(Colin Pritchard)

It's early days yet but watch out for libel victor Jeffrey Archer having won a historical place in slang. We know that a 'pony' is £25, a 'monkey' £500, and a 'grand' £1000. Now from the underworld I learn of a topical addition: a wad know as an 'Archer', which, as Monica Coghlan discovered, amounts to £2,000. — *Daily Telegraph*
(Bob Graham)

A flock of lazy sheep hired to keep down the grass at St Mary's Church, Pentney, have been 'sacked'. Villagers complained that they trampled on graves and lay on the grass instead of eating it. — *Daily Telegraph*
(R. A. England)

A Chinese cyclist who for weeks thought the two-and-a-half inch gap between double yellow lines was a cycle lane has been put on the right track by police at Oxford. — *Daily Express*
(George Moor)

Life-long socialist Mrs Doris Holland, 67, is defecting to the Tories because a dog bit her finger off as she put a Labour leaflet through a letterbox. — *Daily Telegraph*
(J. T. Hart)

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